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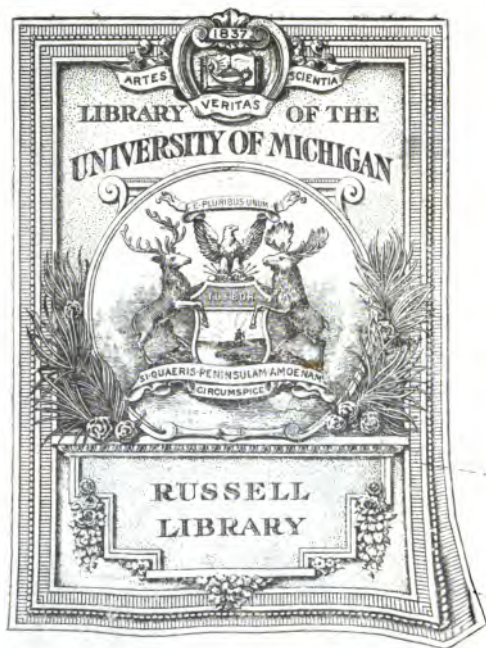
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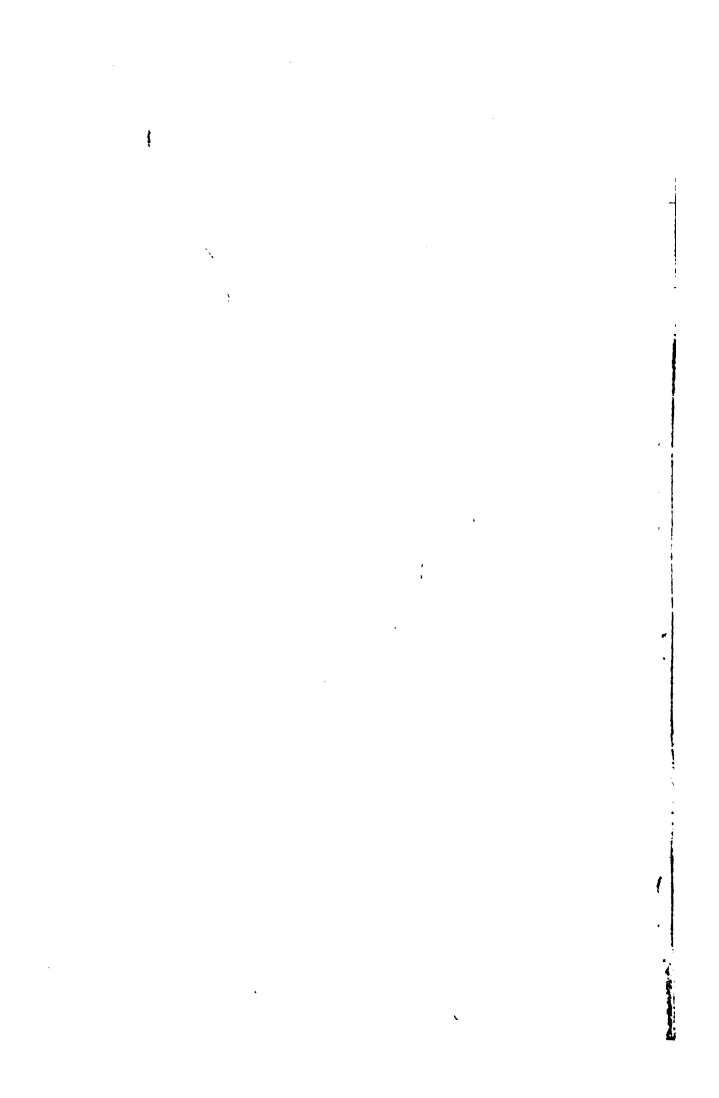
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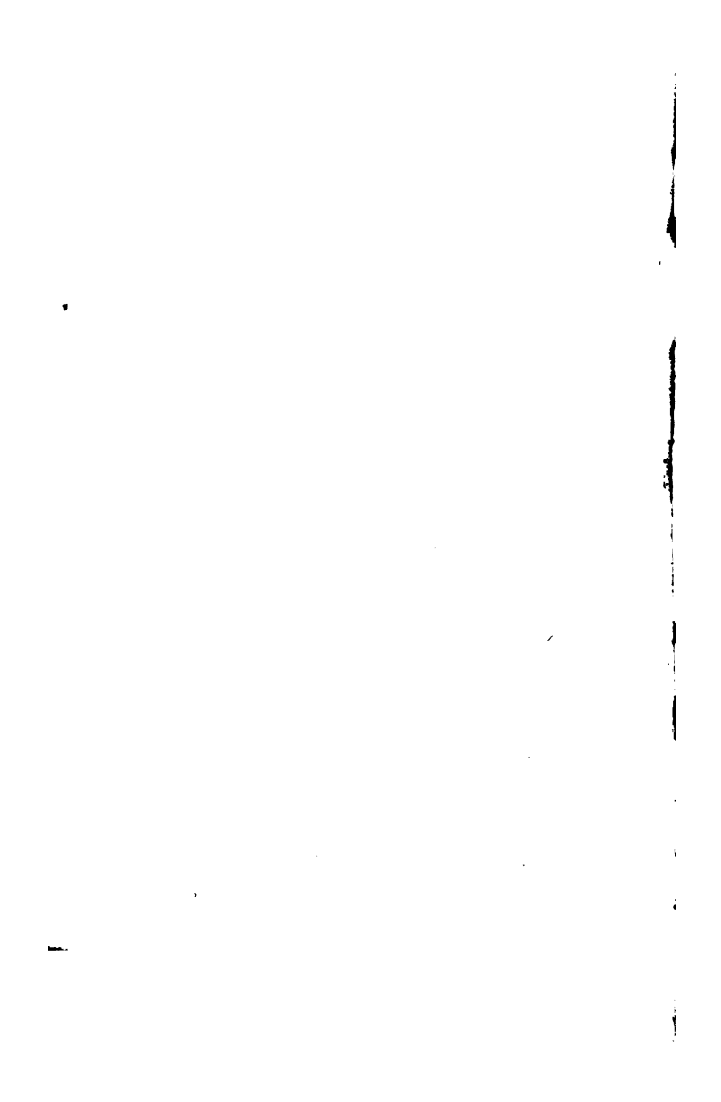




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THE
LIFE AND TRAVELS
OF
ST. PAUL.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION;

BY G. T. BEDELL, D. D.
Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

PHILADELPHIA:
No. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

1830.

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the third day of November, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1830, Paul Beck, jun. Treasurer, in trust for the American Sunday-School Union, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The Life and Travels of St. Paul. Written for the American Sunday-School Union; by G. T. Bedell, D. D. Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia. Revised by the Committee of Publication."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also to the act, entitled, "An Act Supplementary to an Act, entitled 'An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,

Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

Birth-place, extraction, early education, natural disposition, and religious profession of Saul.

THE story of real life is always full of interest, no matter how obscure the person may be whose history is written; the simple fact of the memoir being a record of the life of a human being, gives to it a strong hold on the mind of the reader. When the subject of the memoir is one whose history is connected with great events, the interest is increased; but when the record is that of perfect truth, and written under the guidance of the Spirit of God, it attracts, as it deserves, the highest regard. It is not strange then, that by old and young, there appears to be an unwearied pleasure in reading the histories that are

given to us in the sacred Scriptures. Though every page may be as familiar to us as the alphabet, the very fact that it is true, and certainly true, because written under the inspiration of God, gives an interest which it were in vain to look for, in any other narrative.

In the lives recorded in the Bible, we have real examples, which not only give us right views of the human heart, but lead us to see how necessary and how perfect is that salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out by his death and sufferings, and of which he has given us such full assurance by his glorious resurrection from the dead. Among those whose names have found a place in the sacred record, there is none of more note than he whose history we now present. No human being has done so much by his writings and life to extend the knowledge of the Gospel, and to none are mankind more indebted for the labours he has done and the sufferings he has borne for the cause of Truth and the good of his fellow men.

It is our design to set before our readers a plain and connected history of this great man, adding to the facts recorded in scripture only

such things as will explain the truths there presented.

* SAUL, (for this was his name at first), is supposed to have been born about eleven years after the birth of our Saviour. His birth-place was the city of Tarsus, then the chief city of Cilicia. It is situated near the river Cydnus,* which falls into the Mediterranean sea, about lat. $36^{\circ} 53'$ north, lon. $34^{\circ} 52'$ east.† It was originally called *Terasso*. It was once a city of note, but is now a poor little town fallen to decay.

The names of the parents of Saul are not mentioned in the Scriptures, though we learn that he was a descendant of the Patriarch Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin. He calls himself, "An Hebrew of the Hebrews," by which he means that he was an Israelite on both sides, by father and mother, and from one generation to another, none of his ancestors having ever married with the gentiles; so that he was purely of Jewish extraction.

Besides this, by birth Saul was a Roman citizen; that is, he had the same privileges as an actual citizen of Rome; for, according to

* Now Kara.

† Please refer to the map.

the custom of those days, extraordinary privileges were conferred on those who had rendered remarkable public services, and it is generally supposed that some of Saul's ancestors had been distinguished during the wars of the Roman commonwealth, and had thus received the benefit of being considered as Roman citizens. This privilege was used by Saul to his advantage on a variety of occasions.

That Saul had an excellent early education there can be no question, for Tarsus was celebrated as a seat of learning. A great ancient Geographer, who lived in the same age, tells us that the inhabitants of Tarsus excelled even those of Athens, and Alexandria, in their attention to learning; and we know that Saul, in three different places, makes quotations from no less than three of the most distinguished Heathen authors. As it was the custom of the natives of Tarsus, to travel to other cities to advance themselves in learning, Saul, at a pretty early age, removed to Jerusalem, where he pursued the study of the Jewish law out of the scriptures and traditions, under Gamaliel, a celebrated teacher of that day. According to a very excellent

practice which the Jews had, the parents of Saul completed his education by having him taught a mechanical employment, by which, in case of necessity, he might maintain himself without being a burden to his friends or the public. On this principle Saul was taught the art of tent-making.

As to the natural disposition of Saul, he appears to have been a young man of great abilities, strong passions, and wonderful resolution and decision of character. He thus may be said to have been remarkably qualified for usefulness in whatever he should undertake. Divine grace afterwards sanctified these principles, and brought them most advantageously to bear on the interests of the christian religion.

Under the teaching of Gamaliel, Saul became acquainted with all Jewish learning—with the principles of his own religion; and the most generally received interpretation of the books of the old Testament. He united himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the strictest and most orthodox sect of the Jewish church; and as he made great proficiency in his studies, so he became a most zealous and

devoted adherent to all the Mosaic institutions. Such an attachment might be greatly increased by the influence of his tutor: at least we know that he came out from under his care a rigid, bigoted Pharisee. He laid an undue stress on the observance of the Jewish ceremonies, and as he could not bear to hear that these ceremonies were to be abolished to make room for a more spiritual system, he imbibed with his early education a spirit of opposition to the Gospel. He thought, (and it seemed to be a firm conviction,) that it was his duty to exert himself against the Christian faith. He tells us in his epistle to the Galatians, (i. 14,) that he was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers," than many of his own nation: and in his speech before Agrippa, which is recorded in Acts xxvi. he tells us, in the ninth verse, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Now some have been disposed to ask, if Saul acted *sincerely* and according to the dictates of his *conscience*, where was he to blame?—This question is very easily answered. His sin consisted in his not taking proper pains to convince himself of the truth—

it was his wicked unconverted heart, which prevented his giving the gospel a serious attention and fair examination. He must have had many opportunities of being acquainted with its evidence, during his residence at Jerusalem ; but he was not disposed to see the truth of a system which overthrew his proud principles ; he therefore obstinately refused to admit the light which was offered. While *truth* can be attained, no man can be excused for continuing in error ; and no matter how *sincere* he may be while he is in error, he will be condemned, because he *would not come to the truth*.—We shall see what Saul thought and said of himself when we come to notice some subsequent portions of his history.

CHAPTER II.

First mention of Saul connected with persecution—His miraculous conversion—Baptism—Begins to preach the gospel—Observations on his conversion.

WE said something in the last chapter about the sincerity of Saul; we shall now see that, with all his sincerity, he had a most unsubdued and wicked spirit, showing that though he was very bigoted in his attachment to the Jewish church, he had no change of heart. The very first mention of the name of Saul is connected with the death of that good man St. Stephen. He, with a great multitude of Jews, heard this preacher deliver the sermon which is contained in the seventh chapter of the Acts; and they were so exceedingly mad with Stephen's faithfulness, in telling them that they were sinners, and in preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, that they interrupted him in his sermon, made a great noise, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear him. It would have been well had they ceased here;

but when their passions were excited they knew not where to end, and so they drove Stephen out of Jerusalem, and stoned him to death. Saul was probably the youngest of the party, and the others gave him their clothes to take care of while they were engaged in this cruel business. The sacred history tells us, that "Saul was consenting unto his death;" that is, he stood by and looked on and approved what was doing, and therefore was actually as bad as those who killed him. But Saul soon showed what evil was in his heart. He had enjoyed, as it were, a taste of blood in the death of Stephen; and he soon proceeded to great lengths. With a furious disposition, more like a beast of prey than a human creature, he sought out the disciples of Christ that he might destroy them. He went to great extremes indeed, before it pleased God to stop his mad career. In the third verse of the eighth chapter of Acts we are told, "as for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." In his speech to his own countrymen recorded in Acts, (twenty-second chapter,) he confesses that

he "imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed;" and in his speech before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. he says, "and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." From his own confessions therefore, it is plain that he wanted to root out the Christians entirely. In order to do this he obtained authority from the high priest, and then went off to Damascus to do this wicked work. This shows his zeal to do evil towards the christians; for Damascus was a great way from Jerusalem, about one hundred and sixty miles north-east of that city. On this journey he was accompanied by others, who hated the religion of the Lord Jesus as much as he did.

After such an account as this, no one can doubt what was Saul's state of mind. He was certainly "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." The principles by which he was actuated, and the conduct he pursued, were highly offensive to God, so that we cannot but consider him in that period of his life, as altogether hateful in the sight of

God. It is true that he was strict in his manners, that he was moral, and blameless before men. He was constant and exact in all the forms of external devotion; and thus filled with pride and prejudice, he "went about to establish his own righteousness," and thought he was in a fair way of going to heaven. He did not understand the spirituality of God's law; he was unconverted; and if he had been cut off in his state of sin, he must have gone to hell.

And now, my young reader, before I go further, let me say to you, that you, like Saul, may be conscious of your own rectitude, and yet be deceived. You may abstain from gross immoralities, and you may be very regular in your attention to your outward religious duties, and yet from the inward tempers and dispositions of your unconverted heart, you may be altogether hateful in the sight of God. Learn from the example which is before you, the necessity of a total change of heart. Such a change took place in Saul, when he was about twenty-four years of age, which was four years after the crucifixion of our Saviour. Saul had, as you know, set off for Damascus; and when

he was within view of the city, he saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him. This happened in the middle of the day, which made it more remarkable ; and so powerful was the dazzling splendour, that Saul and his companions were all struck down to the ground. It would seem from what is said, in 1 Cor. xv. 8, that Saul actually saw the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he had fallen, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul asks, "who art thou Lord?" and the Lord said—"I am *Jesus* whom thou persecutest." Saul, trembling and astonished at this awful vision, his pride subdued, and his mind filled with a sense of the presence of God, cried out "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" The will of God is all that he now wants to know. The Lord graciously answers him ; and instead of cutting him off in anger, he bids him arise from his fallen state, and go into the city, where he would learn from one of those whom he sought to destroy, what he ought to do.—How, great an honour did the Lord here put upon his disciples ! He makes one of them the instrument of doing that which he might, in a

word, have done himself. The men who were with Saul stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one from whom it came.

At the command of Jesus, Saul arose from the earth, but he was blind—the power of sight was suspended. He could not see the companions of his journey, but they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus, and he was there three days without sight, and so deeply affected that he did neither eat nor drink. The bold persecutor became the humble, broken-hearted penitent, and was then prepared for a message of mercy.

There was a disciple living at Damascus, named Ananias whom the Lord used as the messenger of peace to the afflicted Saul; and in order to show this disciple that it was his duty to look out the dreaded persecutor, and administer to him the comforts of that faith which he sought to destroy, the Lord appeared to him in a vision. He called him by name—Ananias. The disciple answered, Behold I am here, Lord.—The Lord saith to him, arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for be-

hold he prayeth ; and he hath seen in a vision, a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. To this direction Ananias replies, that he had heard from many persons the terrible character of this Saul, and how much evil he had done to the holy people of God at Jerusalem, and that he had even come to that place with authority from the chief priests to bind all that called on the name of the Lord Jesus. But the mercy of the Lord was not diverted by the relation of these things. He tells Ananias to do as he is directed, declaring that this Saul was a chosen vessel to bear his name before the gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel. Ananias arose, and according to the particular directions he had received of the street and the house, went directly to the place ; and putting his hands upon Saul, addressed him very affectionately—brother Saul, the Lord, that Jesus who appeared to you on the way as you were coming, hath sent me, that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Immediately as Ananias had spoken, there fell from the eyes of Saul a substance like scales, his sight was restored, and he was

baptized. His conscience being now at rest, and his peace made with God, he took food, and his exhausted frame was strengthened. He remained some days in Damascus with the disciples, and without any delay began his glorious work of declaring the precious truths of the Gospel. His great theme there, was Christ, —as it continued to be to the end of his life, and doubtless will be throughout eternity. He appeared boldly in the synagogues, and preached Christ, that he is the Son of God.

Such a remarkable circumstance as this, ought not to be passed over without some few observations. We admire the Divine perfections as displayed in the conversion of Saul. We cannot but perceive in it the sovereignty of God, who, without being accountable to us, raises up what instruments he pleases, for his own service and glory. And the case before us shows how feeble is the strongest opposition to God. What can the most furious persecutors do? “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.” He can suddenly confound their purposes, strike terror in their

hearts, humble them under his own mighty hand, and then make them zealous and qualified advocates of his truth in the world.

The wisdom of God also appears very clearly, in his selecting just such a person as Saul, who, from his former character, would seem most unlikely to be employed in the promotion of the kingdom of Christ. He is therefore a very desirable witness for the truth of the gospel; for such had been his previous prejudices, and afterwards such was his patient submission to suffering and persecution for the sake of the gospel, that no one can, with any kind of reason, question his sincere conversion to the faith.

The conversion of Saul, illustrates the rich mercy of God, and the all-sufficiency of his grace. He represents his own case as the remarkable conversion of a great sinner, so that true penitents might not despair, however far they may have wandered away from God. He tells us, that he obtained mercy, for the very purpose that others might not give up seeking after God. The same Saviour who rescued Paul, can save the greatest sinners,

subdue their opposition, sanctify their polluted hearts, pardon their numerous and aggravated sins, and even turn their opposition into friendship. Flee to Jesus, O sinner, and he will receive thee, and make of thee "a chosen vessel fit for the Master's use."

CHAPTER III.

*Saul resides three years at Damascus—
Preaches to the Jews—Is persecuted and flies
to Tarsus—Visits Antioch, and then goes to
Jerusalem.*

AFTER his wonderful conversion, as recorded in the last chapter, Saul did not immediately return to Jerusalem, but remained in Damascus, with the exception of a short visit which he made into some parts of Arabia, and to which he briefly alludes in his Epistle to the Galatians. We do not know for what purpose he made this visit to Arabia; but it must have been for some good design, as he could not be idle in his Master's cause and service. Those who are truly converted, are always ready and anxious to do something for their Master.

After this short visit he returned to Damascus, and spent his time principally in preaching the Lord Jesus, to those whom he calls his kinsmen according to the flesh, that is, the Jews. But they could not be induced to believe his testimony. Instead of listening to his arguments and exhortations, they entered into a combination against his life, and he would, most unquestionably, have been killed, had not the Lord interposed in his behalf. As the enemies of Saul watched the gates of the city day and night, lest he should escape, the Lord put it into the hearts of the disciples to contrive a plan by which his blood-thirsty enemies might be defeated. They put him in a large basket, and by ropes let him down over the wall one night, so that he escaped. At the time when this occurred, *Aretas* king of Arabia had possession of Damascus. For though Damascus was made a Roman province in the time of Pompey the Great, yet in the war between *Aretas* and *Herod Antipas*, the former took Damascus and held it for some time. This very strikingly accounts for the remark made by St. Paul in 2 Cor. xi. 32. "In Damascus, the governor under *Aretas* the

king, kept the city of Damascus with a garrison, desiring to apprehend me ; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands." And we see from this, that when the Lord wills, there are many ways by which his servants can get out of the way of their enemies. It is only necessary to trust in the Lord, and there is no danger.

After Saul had escaped from Damascus, he went all the way to Jerusalem, which was a very long journey in those days. He, probably, had to walk all the way ; but nothing tired him when he was about his Master's business. When he reached Jerusalem, however, he found that the disciples there were all afraid of him ; and this shows with how much terror his former persecutions had filled all the church. Notwithstanding the report of his conversion, they did not want to have any thing to do with him, but God raised him up a friend among them. This friend was Barnabas, who related every thing which he knew or had heard, and Saul was then received as a fellow labourer in the Gospel. It is reasonable to suppose that Saul must have felt very strangely when he first began to preach

in Jerusalem ; for this was the very place where he used to be so great a persecutor ; and it is very likely that he met with many persons who formerly knew him, and feared him too. As he had, before his conversion, so grievously persecuted the christians in Jerusalem, he now determined most faithfully to preach the Gospel there ; and he did it with so much zeal and power, that he soon excited the indignation of his countrymen ; and as he had been obliged to fly for his life from Damascus, so he was compelled to do the same from Jerusalem. His brethren went with him to a place called Cæsarea, which is a sea-port on the Mediterranean sea ; and, finding some conveyance ready, they sent him to Tarsus, the place where he had been born. All this happened in the year of our Lord 42. Saul remained in Tarsus, and the neighbourhood, for the next four years, no doubt preaching the Gospel of the Saviour wherever he could get an opportunity, and preparing himself for further usefulness.

After a short time, the apostles at Jerusalem heard that there was a great revival of religion in a town called Antioch. There were sixteen

towns of this name in Syria, but the one alluded to was the capital ; once a very celebrated place, but now ruined entirely. Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to this city, to see what was going on ; and when he came, he found that there had been a great out-pouring of the spirit. As the Scriptures tell us, that he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, we are not surprised to hear that he was glad when he discovered such a state of things, and that he spent his time in exhorting them with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. But as such peculiar circumstances rendered his labour very heavy, he went to Tarsus to seek Saul, and brought him back with him to Antioch. The work here was so great, that Barnabas and Saul continued one whole year ; and what is very remarkable, this Antioch was the very first place where the disciples were called *christians*. But, my dear young readers, to be *called christians* and to *be christians* are two things. The most of you are probably called christians, because you have been born and educated in a christian land. Oh, that you were all really christians ; that is, that you were new created in Christ

Jesus, by having your hearts changed by the grace of God. None but real christians will ever be saved.

While all this was going on at Antioch, it so happened that there was a great drought over all the land of Judea, and the poor christians at Jerusalem suffered very much from want; for every thing became very dear, as things always are when there is a scarcity. The disciples at Antioch, hearing of this, determined that they would make a contribution for their poor brethren in Jerusalem; and they sent it by Barnabas and Saul. Thus we see that after five years' absence, four in Tarsus and the neighbourhood, and one in Antioch, Saul once more comes to Jerusalem. He staid here however but a little time, as his special business had been to carry the contributions of the church at Antioch; and after he had done this, he and Barnabas went back and took with them John, who is better known under the name of Mark—and here they all continued for a while preaching the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

Saul and Barnabas appointed missionaries, and some account of their first missionary tour, with many other interesting circumstances.

THE history of the appointment of Saul and Barnabas as missionaries, is contained in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, and is briefly as follows. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."—

Saul and Barnabas being thus appointed to the missionary work, they went out, like the Patriarch of old, depending only on the Lord for guidance and direction. They immedi-

ately left Antioch, and went to Seleucia, which is a sea-port town on the Mediterranean, no very great distance off. It stands at the mouth of the same river on which Antioch stands, namely, the Orontes; and the name by which Seleucia is now known, is Suveidia. Here they took passage, and went to a very large island in the Mediterranean, called Cyprus, about one hundred miles from the main land of Syria, and about seventy miles from the main land of Cilicia. This island is about two hundred miles long from east to west, and about sixty miles broad. It is shaped somewhat like a triangle. This island was so remarkable for its fertility, that the ancients called it, "the rich and the happy island:" but the people were as remarkable for their wickedness. It must have been an island of a great many inhabitants when Saul landed there; for in the year of our Lord 1570, when the Turks conquered it, it contained no less than one million of people; but now the number is reduced below forty thousand.

The first place in which Saul appears to have preached the Gospel in Cyprus, was in

a city called *Salamis*, where, most probably, they had landed, as it was a sea-port town, standing on a most beautiful bay. Here they preached the word of God, in the synagogues of the Jews, but how long they staid there, the sacred history does not tell us. From this place Saul and Barnabas took a tour through the whole island, and reached a place called *Paphos*, a celebrated city at the very western extremity of the island. And here a very curious circumstance took place. Sergius Paulus, who was the Roman governor of the island, discovered a favourable disposition, and desired to hear the Gospel. But there was there a noted magician, or conjuror, named Elymas, one of those wicked people who used, in former days, to go about pretending to do miracles; and this man, finding himself in danger of losing his influence, tried to prejudice the governor against religion, and to turn him away from the faith. Saul, addressing this vile opposer of the Gospel, who laboured to keep others in darkness, said to him,—“O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to per-

vert the ways of the Lord? And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." Hereupon there came over him a mist and a darkness, and having lost his sight, he went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand.

The Governor, being convinced by this miracle, embraced the Christian religion. There are many circumstances which conspire to prevent the free access of the ministers of Christ, to persons of high rank. They, whose interest or influence is likely to suffer by the Gospel, will try to oppose it; but the enemies of truth shall be defeated, like Elymas, and the word of God shall prosper.

Our readers will probably remember, that all along in this history, we have called the individual, about whom we have been writing, *Saul*. But the sacred history, while it is telling us about this curious transaction at Paphos, also tells us that Saul was also called *Paul*, and afterwards, in the history, he is spoken of by this name. We are not able to tell why his name was changed. The most general opinion is, that Saul changed his name to Paul

to commemorate the first considerable conversion which was made through his instrumentality, viz.: that of *Sergius Paulus*. Whatever might have been the reason, we shall hereafter, following the history, call him *Paul*.

We do not know how long Paul and Barnabas remained in the island of Cyprus. When they left Paphos, they went over to that part of the coast of Asia Minor called Pamphylia, and journeyed to an inland city, called Perga. This was one of the largest cities in that province, and stood on a river called Caystrus. There is nothing remarkable related of Paul here; and the only circumstance in the history, at all necessary to mention, is, that Paul and Barnabas were here deserted by one of their fellow-labourers, John Mark, who returned to Jerusalem. He did not renounce the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he seems to have grown tired of the missionary work. We hope that he was soon convinced of his error, and commenced the work again.

From Perga, Paul and Barnabas went to *Antioch*, in Pisidia. This was a different place from the Antioch mentioned before, and not a place of so much consequence. But

some very important particulars here occurred, for here Paul and Barnabas attended the worship of the Jewish synagogue; and after the usual service, Paul, being invited by the rulers of the synagogue to address the congregation, rose up and preached a most faithful Gospel sermon, some account of which will, we trust, be interesting to our readers. To impress their minds in favour of the glorious doctrine which he was about to preach, he began with a history and explanation of some of the merciful dispensations of God towards their ancestors, particularly in having given them the promise of a Saviour, and by slow degrees preparing them for his reception. He then went on to tell them, that Jesus Christ was the very one who had been all along predicted. That John the Baptist acknowledged him as the Messiah—that by the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their rulers he was put to death, even against the will of Pilate the governor, no fault being found in him. “And,” he continues, “when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in the sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: and he

was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." What ought to have had a great effect on them was, that the apostle argued the whole matter as agreeable to their own scriptures, that is the Old Testament; and that, according to their own prophecies, of which they were proud, Jesus had been raised from the dead, and therefore was the very Saviour whom they professed to look for. He most solemnly entreated them to accept that full and free redemption which was offered in Christ, and warned them, in the awful language of the prophet, not to reject the gracious terms of salvation. This was the substance of that discourse of Paul, which is contained in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. It is a melancholy fact, however, that none of the audience appear to have been properly impressed. Some of the Gentiles seem to

have been interested, and requested that the next Sabbath-day he would preach to them.

Paul and Barnabas spent the week in going about visiting the pious persons, and exhorting them to maintain an active state of religion in their own souls. On the next Sabbath there came together almost the whole city to hear the word of God preached by Paul and Barnabas. We are not, however, to suppose from this, that they all came from a good motive. We know that, in these days, great crowds will go to hear even those men and women who are opposers to the truth as it is in Jesus. There is always in the unconverted heart an opposition to religion, although their curiosity may lead them to church. However, almost all the people went, and the Jews, who saw that they were all apparently anxious to know something about the Gospel, became angry; they openly contradicted what Paul said, and at last began to abuse him and to blaspheme, their passions became so heated. Paul went on, however, and preached more and more boldly, till at last he was compelled to tell them, that though in God's goodness it was necessary that the first offer of the Gospel should be

made to them, still, if they would not have it, but chose to ruin their own souls, he would go and preach to the Gentiles, and that they would hear it, and accept God's mercy. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad to find that the Gospel was offered to them, and they glorified the word of the Lord, accepting pardon through Christ. The Gospel was preached through all that neighbourhood, and there were many converted souls who joined themselves to the disciples.

The wicked Jews, however, could not let the matter rest. They raised a great noise and outcry, and at last Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city. One curious circumstance occurred. In this persecution, we are told, the *devout and honourable women* were engaged. By devout and honourable, the writer means, those who were very strict in the Jewish religion, so far as *form* goes, and that they were respectable persons. No really devout persons could have been engaged in so wicked a business. It often happens, that those who make a great show of religion, get offended when there is any remarkable attention to the subject, and that which ought to be a matter of great rejoic-

ing, often excites envy and displeasure. The Lord's cause, however, is always safe, and no matter how many persecutors or persecutions arise, the work of religion must go on and prosper. Although Paul and Barnabas were driven with fury from Antioch, their hearts were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost; with joy for the establishment of a church, and the conversion of souls, and with the Holy Ghost, or with the special influence of the Spirit of God.

From Antioch they went to *Iconium*, which was then the capital of *Lycaonia*. It is one hundred and ten miles from the Mediterranean sea. The apostles had great success in their Master's cause here, but they were treated at length precisely as they had been in Antioch, and were compelled to fly. Nevertheless, the word had taken deep root, for a church was here planted which flourished for eight hundred years. After it was taken by the Turks, however, the christians were reduced to a very low condition, and soon were expelled from the city, and obliged to live in the suburbs. Whether there are any christians there now or not, we cannot tell. From *Iconium*, Paul and Barnabas fled to *Lystra*. This was the city where

Timothy was born. At this place, a poor man, who had been born a cripple, and never had walked, but who had listened with faith to the preaching of Paul, was by him restored to the use of his limbs; and the ignorant multitude, who were idolaters, because they saw miracles, supposed that Paul must be a god, and they actually began to prepare to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, calling Barnabas, Jupiter, the name of their principal false deity, and Paul they called, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. This circumstance very greatly distressed Paul and Barnabas, for they did not want man's applause. They rent their clothes in token of their great distress, and ran in among the people, and begged them to desist. They told them, that they were only men, and exhorted them to turn from their follies to the service of the true and living God. Their address is remarkably energetic. "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered

all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

One thing is very curious to notice, viz., how soon people may change their opinions. Some of those wicked persecutors came from Antioch and Iconium to this place, and succeeded in prejudicing the people of Lystra against Paul. The very same persons then, who had a little while before wanted to worship him as a god, now were induced to treat him so cruelly, as even to stone him till they thought he was dead. They dragged him out of the city, and left him as if life had departed. Here, therefore, to all human probability, the history of the apostle appeared to be concluded, but the Lord God, who had designed him for very great usefulness in the church, interposed in his behalf. Paul it appears had not been quite killed; there was some little life in him, and while the disciples stood by, weeping and mourning, no doubt, over

his cruel and untimely fate, God restored him at once to his former strength. He rose up, and, to the great astonishment and fright of his friends, he went back into the city, and staid there till the next day, when he went with Barnabas to a place called Derbe.

Derbe was a town said to be about twenty miles in a south-eastern direction from Lystra. It does not appear to have been a place of much consequence. Paul and Barnabas preached here with considerable success, but how long they staid is not ascertained. After they had staid as long as was by them thought expedient, they started on their return to Antioch, going through most of the places where they had before preached the Gospel, for the purpose of once more comforting the disciples with the word of God. They exhorted the professors throughout that region to cling to their christian profession, under all the afflictions which might be brought upon them, and told them, what will be found true in the experience of all the children of God in a greater or lesser degree, that they must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of heaven.

At several of the cities where churches had

been organized, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders to preside over the interests of the new churches, and to preach the Gospel of Christ. This missionary visit was the origin of those churches which were planted all along the route which Paul took, and which, under Divine grace, flourished a long time in great prosperity; but now they are no more, having fallen under the anger of God, for errors in doctrine, and for unholiness in life.

In their way home, Paul and Barnabas passed through Pisidia, which was a district of country very narrow, but of some length. It lay in a kind of semi-circle, along the southern and western side of Mount Taurus. Once this small district was very populous, having no less than eighteen cities. There were also a great many churches, which Paul and Barnabas planted, and here religion flourished for seven or eight hundred years. When the Turks finally conquered the country, every thing like religion was destroyed.

After they had passed through Pisidia, they came into the section of country called *Pamphylia*, in which was a city, before noticed,

called Perga, situated on the river Caystrus, a large place, where there was a Temple of Diana. From this place they travelled to a city in the same province, called *Attalia*. This was a sea-port town, situated on a very fine bay, which opened into the Mediterranean sea. Here they embarked, and soon reached Antioch in Syria, the city from which they had departed. As soon as they could, they called the church together, and told every thing which had occurred—they gave them what we would call, in these days, a missionary report of their proceedings, showing that God had prospered them much in their effort to introduce christianity among the heathen people. On this tour, Paul and Barnabas had been absent about two years. We are told, that after so long an absence, they took up their abode in Antioch, and remained there a long time with the disciples of Christ in that city, no doubt actively engaged in their important duties.

CHAPTER V.

Paul remains some time at Antioch—Discussion there about circumcision—Goes to Jerusalem—Council of the church—Settlement of the question, and return of Paul with Barnabas to Antioch.

AFTER Paul and Barnabas had remained some time in Antioch, (this was Antioch in Syria,) they were compelled to experience what is really more trying to the feelings of a christian, than all the fury of his enemies. They were compelled to witness the introduction of some great errors in doctrine. There were some persons, how many, or who they were, we are not informed; but they came down from Judea with all their Jewish prejudices, though they were professedly converted to christianity, and they attempted to teach the new converts at Antioch, that unless they were circumcised, and kept the ceremonial laws of the Jews, they could not be saved. Some might say, what great harm could there be in these opinions—but the Apostle dis-

covered the evil, for it struck at the very fundamental principles of christianity. By inculcating the necessity of conformity to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, in order to be saved, it was as much as saying at once, that the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was not a sufficient ground on which to rest all hopes of salvation. These errors struck a blow at the great and vital doctrine of justification by faith, and seemed to teach the wicked error, that our own works can make us acceptable in the sight of God. Paul, as a faithful servant of his Master, set himself to oppose these errors with all his might, and he succeeded so far in putting a stop to their progress, as to induce the disciples at Antioch to send for advice to the church at Jerusalem, composed of older, and wiser, and more experienced christians than themselves. This they did; and Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem, announcing, as they went through Phenice and Samaria, the glad tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles. When the apostles and elders came together to discuss the matter which had caused the difficulty, Peter made an address, in which he took

the same view of the subject which Paul had. After Peter had spoken, Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the conversion of the Gentiles among whom they had preached the Gospel. When James had spoken, the conference was broken up, after determining upon a letter containing the unanimous opinion of all present on the question, and this opinion they declare to have been suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration they were acting. The decision was, that the Gentiles, who became christians, were not bound by the Jewish ceremonial law, but that they were not to be allowed to eat meat that had been offered to idols, nor blood, nor the flesh of animals that had been put to death by strangling. This letter was carried by Judas, (whose surname was Barsabas,) and Silas, who were both distinguished men among the brethren. When they reached Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, they called the disciples together, and communicated the contents of the letter—and said a great many other things to do away the effects of the error which had been introduced. In this they happily succeeded. The brethren were all delighted at

the settlement of the question, and every thing went on prosperously, by the goodness of God. Judas and Silas being preachers, exhorted the people with many words, and their preaching confirmed them in the belief of the truths taught by Paul. After staying at Antioch a short time, it was agreed by the brethren, that they might return to the apostles, but Silas preferred staying there, no doubt encouraged by the success of his preaching, and desirous of being further useful.

As Silas thought to remain at Antioch, Paul proposed to Barnabas to go on another missionary tour, to see what the state of religion was in those places where they had before preached the Gospel. Barnabas agreed to go, but wanted to take with them the same John Mark, who had left them while they were on the former mission. This John Mark was a nephew of Barnabas, which was one reason, we suppose, why he wanted to take him. Paul did not think it right to take him, as he had deserted them once before. This made Barnabas angry, and Paul himself did not behave as humbly and as meekly as he ought to have done. Even good men are sometimes led

into mistakes of judgment, and into an improper way of maintaining their own sentiments. We have no doubt that both were very soon sorry for what they said and did. As they could not agree exactly whether it was right to take John Mark, they determined to go different ways, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed to Cyprus. Paul, as he needed a companion also, took Silas, and went through Syria and Cilicia.

In the next chapter, we shall give some account of this missionary tour ; but before we close this, we must make a remark on the wisdom and goodness of God's overruling Providence, which in various ways brings good out of evil. This very dispute between Paul and Barnabas, wrong as it was, became the means of enlarging the church, and promoting the salvation of many souls. We can easily see this, when we remember that, in consequence of this misunderstanding, Barnabas went one way and Paul another, so that the glad tidings of the Gospel were carried to two different parts, instead of being confined to one. The misunderstanding was soon made up, for we find Paul speaking of Barnabas as his "be-

loved Barnabas ;” and he also took John Mark to assist him. Christians, even the best, are sometimes led astray, but if they are sincere, they soon show their penitence and sorrow, and rectify the error.

CHAPTER VI.

Some account of Paul's second missionary tour, in which he suffers a great deal, but has much success—He preaches in several cities before visited—Directed to go to Macedonia—Visits Philippi—Dreadfully treated there.

ST. PAUL is supposed to have commenced his second missionary tour about the year of our Lord 53, and as Barnabas, with Mark, went another way, Paul took Silas with him; and being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God, they went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Nothing very remarkable is related of them until they came to *Lystra*, the place where Paul before had been so barbarously treated. Here he

met with a young convert named *Timothy*, with whom he appears to have been particularly delighted; and to have remained so during the whole of his life. As St. Paul was desirous of taking him with him as an associate in his further progress, and as he wished also to set him apart for the work of the ministry, he saw fit to have him circumcised according to the law of Moses.

The conduct of the Apostle on this occasion has given rise to a variety of conjectures. He opposed circumcision on some occasions; why, therefore, did he yield to it on this? This is easily explained. St. Paul objected to the circumcision of Titus, because those who wanted Titus circumcised, insisted on it as necessary to salvation. On this ground St. Paul would not consent to it, lest he should thereby appear to deny or renounce the great doctrine of justification by faith. In the case of Timothy there was no danger. St. Paul had that rite performed with Timothy's own consent, in order that his ministry might be more acceptable to the prejudices of the Jews. His mother also was a Jewess, although his father was a Greek, and as a Jew by birth, his not

having been circumcised before, was an omission. Being a Jew he would no doubt be better received as a minister and teacher by his countrymen; and as they knew his father was a Greek, they would not receive him as a Jew unless he was by this ceremony brought into their ranks. This was a mark of wisdom and meekness, and had a tendency to do away objections which otherwise would have hindered the progress of the Gospel. It is never right, under any circumstances whatever, to do evil that good may come; but it is right sometimes to yield, in matters of comparative indifference, for the sake of benefiting others.

It seemed in the providence of God, that this second missionary tour of St. Paul should extend to places very remote from where he had ever been before. In company with Timothy and Silas, he visited the cities of Phrygia and Galatia, which are provinces in Asia Minor, and carried the decision of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in relation to the controversy before alluded to. This letter and decision were very acceptable to the people.

When the Apostles had gone through that

country, they received intimations from the Holy Spirit, that this part of the world was not to be the scene of their labours. With his beloved companions Silas and Timothy, Paul then thought he would go through Mysia, and Bythinia, the very extreme provinces of Asia Minor; but this also he was forbidden to do. Directed by the Spirit of God, he and his companions went through the province of Mysia, to a town called *Troas*, a sea-port town on the Egean sea. This is supposed to be not far from that celebrated place called Troy, which has been rendered so famous by the ancient poet, Homer.

One thing is worthy of notice here. It will be seen by any one who attentively reads the 11th verse of the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that there is a remarkable change in the method in which the journeying of the Apostle is spoken of. In all the preceding history, the writer of the Acts, speaking of St. Paul, says, "*he went from this place to that,*" &c. "*he departed,*" &c.; and speaking of the others, with Paul, he says, "*they departed,*" "*they came,*" "*they went,*" &c. But in this verse he says, "*we came,*" &c. Now what does

this prove ? It proves that Luke, who was the writer of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, joined Paul at this place, and henceforward became one of his companions; so that this missionary company now consisted of Paul, who was the leader, of Silas, of Timothy, and Luke.

But while they were at Troas, Paul had a remarkable vision! There appeared to him a man of Macedonia, and urged him to go over to that country and preach the Gospel. This was the method which God took to intimate to St. Paul where he should go. When he told these things to the rest, they agreed that it was the will of God, and they prepared to go.

We are now to accompany this little band of missionaries into an entire new quarter of the globe, hitherto untrodden by the feet of any regular preacher of Jesus Christ. We mean EUROPE. Hitherto all the efforts of the apostles had been made in Asia, and in that particular part of Asia called Asia Minor, to distinguish it from that immense extent of country embraced in the term Asia, which was one of the four great divisions of the earth; bounded by the Frozen ocean on the north, by the Pacific ocean on the east, by

the Indian ocean on the south; and on the west, south-west, and north-west, by the Red, the Mediterranean, and the Euxine seas. Asia is 4800 miles long, from east to west, and 4300 miles broad, from north to south. *Asia Minor* is that part of Asia which lies between Mount Taurus on the east, and the Hellespont on the west. It was in this small section comparatively, that as far as the Gentiles were concerned, the missionaries of the cross had hitherto laboured. Now we go with them into EUROPE.

From Troas, they took ship, and sailed in a straight course to Simothracia. This was a small island in the Egean sea, now called Samandraki. It is about twenty miles in circumference, and has very good harbours, which we suppose the reason why the vessel stopped there, as there was no town of any consequence on the island. The only thing remarkable of this island is, that it was the earliest seat in Europe of the ancient Eastern idolatry, and the first place in Europe in which the apostles of Jesus touched. The next day, they sailed to Neapolis, where a church was planted by them.

From Neapolis they went to *Philippi*, one

of the chief cities of the province of Macedonia, situated near the Egean sea. It received its name from Philip, king of Macedon. It was to the church at this place that the Apostle wrote an epistle. The place of this once distinguished city is occupied by a small village called Filiba. The Apostles were then in what is now called *Turkey in Europe*, or that portion of Europe which is possessed by the 'Turks, who came over from Asia and conquered it. Philippi was formerly called Dathos, but it afterwards took its name from Philip, a famous king of Macedon, father of him who is called Alexander the Great.

It was during their residence in this town, that some circumstances occurred which cannot fail to be interesting. There is a very minute account of the conversion of an individual, which seems to have been the commencement and foundation of a large and flourishing Church; for it will be remembered, that one of the epistles of St. Paul was addressed to the christians at Philippi. It appears, that on the bank of a small river, very near this city, there was some place which was used as a place of prayer, by whom or for

what special occasions we are not acquainted. From all the circumstance it was most likely to belong to the Jews, as they do not appear then to have had any synagogue in the city. Here, many women were gathered together on the Sabbath-days, and here Paul went to preach the Gospel. Perhaps there were many affected at the faithful exhibition of the word of God, but we only read of one remarkable instance of conversion, and that was of a woman named *Lydia*, of the city of *Thyatira*, who was by trade a seller of purple, and had come all the way from her home; which was a great distance, for the purpose of carrying on her business in this town of Philippi. This purple, which Lydia sold, was either purple silk, which was very much worn by the people in the eastern countries, or else, which is most probable, it was the purple *dye*, which was an article manufactured from a fish, which the Jews called *chalsou*, and which was very scarce and valuable. This fish was found in the Mediterranean sea, particularly in the neighbourhood of the city of Tyre. The Jews used this purple in dyeing the borders or fringes of their garments. As this woman was among

those who resorted to the place appointed for prayer, she had the opportunity of hearing Paul; and the history tells us that the Lord opened her heart to a reception of the truth. In token of her conversion, and of her willingness to embrace the christian religion, she was baptized, and being, it is supposed, in tolerably good circumstances, she determined to extend her hospitality to the apostles. She was so urgent in her claims, that they appear to have abode in her house during their residence in Philippi, except, of course, the time that they were so unjustly put in prison, as we shall soon learn.

There was in the city of Philippi, a young woman, who, according to the scripture account, was possessed of a spirit of divination. It is difficult for us to understand exactly what is meant by this spirit of divination, but by most of the pious and judicious commentators, who have made the Scriptures a subject of much study, it is supposed, that she was actually possessed by some evil spirit. It is very certain that God saw fit to permit such things in the days of our Saviour and his apostles, because many of our Saviour's miracles are

entirely built on this *fact*, as any of our readers must know. Any one who will read the history of our blessed Lord's life, which is given in the Gospels, will find this remark to be true. Why this was permitted, is another thing, which we have no right to enquire into, as "secret things belong unto the Lord our God." The age in which we live, is undoubtedly, for the most part, by the mercy of God, free from this terrible spectacle of human beings evidently possessed by evil spirits. But how far the same agency may be continued at present, it is impossible to tell; though it is not at all hard, to believe, that it does exist to a very great degree. There have been great efforts made to prove, that this young woman must have been either an *impostor*, or that she was a *ventriloquist*, or that she was *crazy*, or that she was led away by some disease acting upon her imagination. We see no reason why St. Luke, who wrote this history, should not have known what was the true state of the case, much better than any persons in our days; and for our part we always submit to the Scriptures, because what is written is the word of God. The plain meaning of the passage is, that some evil

spirit had possession of the body of this young woman, and enabled her to answer certain enquiries which were made.

Even in this case, however, we see the power of God exerted in a very wonderful manner. The evil spirit in this young woman seems to have been compelled to bear testimony in favour of Paul and his company, just as the evil spirits in the days of our Saviour were forced to bear witness to him. An instance of this may be remembered in Mark i. 24, where the devils cried out, "what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come hither to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." So, this young woman, followed Paul, and cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." This she did, for many days; and it placed Paul and his brethren in a very unpleasant situation. For if they let her alone, some might have said, that there was an agreement between them, and that they were all impostors together, and were but trying to deceive the people. Paul was grieved at this, and determined to run the risk of per-

secution, rather than to be suspected, or troubled as he was. He, therefore, in the name of Christ, commanded the evil spirit to come out of her; and by the power of Christ, in whose name Paul spoke, the spirit immediately departed. Now this, as may be expected, cost them a great deal of trouble, and why? because, as this young woman, by her tricks and fortune-telling, &c., brought her masters much money, so, as soon as she was deprived of this power, all the gains of her masters stopped at once. This made them angry, and as Paul and Silas had been most concerned, they seized upon them, and dragged them to the market-place, or rather to the court, which was probably held at or near the market-place. In all the Roman provinces, and this Philippi was one, the court was composed of persons selected from among those who were most qualified. One out of every ten was taken. This court must have been then sitting, as the masters of this young woman went there immediately, and accused the Apostles. They did not, however, accuse the Apostles of casting out this evil spirit, but they took up the general accusation, that they troubled the city by their preaching.

They accused them of teaching things which it was unlawful for Romans to hear. What could these things have been? This is easily ascertained. Paul, wherever he went, preached the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. This they supposed, and very rightly supposed, was preaching another God than those they worshipped, for they worshipped idols. And it was unlawful to receive or worship any new deity, according to the laws of Rome, without an express decree of the Roman senate. This is unquestionably the ground upon which the magistrates condemned Paul and Silas; and so at last, as in all the other cases, they suffered in the cause of their Lord and Master.

No sooner was this accusation made, than the crowd of people who had followed raised a great clamour. The Apostles do not appear to have had any opportunity to defend themselves by argument. The magistrates condemned them at once, tore their clothes off, beat them with rods very severely, till their flesh was dreadfully lacerated. This is one of the three times in which Paul says he was beaten with rods. He alludes to it in the

second chapter of his first epistle to the Thesalonians, where he speaks of it as shameful treatment. Immediately after this, while they were partly naked, and their backs wounded and bleeding, they were cast into prison, in the charge of a cruel jailer. He appears to have been as bad as the rest of them; for not content merely to put them into prison, he placed them in the lower dungeon, no doubt appropriated for the vilest convicts, thrust their feet into the stocks, and there meant to leave them in that dreadful situation all the night. God, however, ordered it otherwise: but the remarkable history of his interposition must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Wonderful transactions which occurred during the imprisonment of Paul and Silas—Conversion of the jailer, and release of the Apostles.

IN our last chapter, we were called upon to contemplate the persecution which the Apostles were obliged to suffer at Philippi. They

were not only hurried away to prison, but cast into a most dismal dungeon, and their feet made fast in the stocks. This was a measure of cruelty, certainly unnecessary, for they might have been easily secured in some far less painful posture. But we hear no complaints from them. They had counted the cost of being apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ; and were, therefore, prepared to submit to every variety and every measure of suffering for the cause of the Master whom they so dearly loved. They knew that they were promoting his cause, and that was sufficient. They could leave all events in his hands, and at his disposal, assured that "all things must work together for good to those who love God;" and that all these afflictions, which could be comparatively but "for a moment," would "work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," while they trusted in the Lord, and did his work.

One thing is certain, and very remarkably illustrated in this history, namely, that when we have the Lord with us, we are not only contented, but we can be happy anywhere,

even in the midst of persecution and distress. Paul and Silas, in their dark and dismal dungeon, and with their bleeding bodies, and with their feet in the stocks, were happy in the Lord; and instead of murmuring and repining, or talking harshly about their enemies, they prayed aloud, and sung praises unto God. Their situation was so painful and uncomfortable, that they could not sleep, but it was not too uncomfortable for them to pray and to sing praises. How wonderfully must their hearts have been supported. They did not know but that they might be treated even worse on the morrow, and perhaps murdered; but it did not alter their state of mind; they still prayed and sung, and so much and so earnestly were they engaged in this exercise, that the other prisoners heard them.

It was in the midst of these interesting circumstances, that God saw fit to interpose most signally in their behalf. He brought about one of those dreadful visitations, called an earthquake, which, by his good providence, however, seems to have been confined to the prison, which was shaken to its very foundation. So hard was the shock, that all the

bars and bolts of the prison were broken, and the chains by which the prisoners had been fastened were unloosed; so that they all, as well as Paul and Silas, had an opportunity of escaping. None did escape, however, because the particular object which God appears to have intended, was the conversion of the jailer himself, which was brought about by these very circumstances.

The noise of the earthquake, the bursting open of the prison doors, the breaking of bars and bolts, and the cries uttered by the prisoners, waked the jailer out of a sound sleep. As soon as he awoke, he found that the prison doors were open, and, probably, supposing that there had been an insurrection among the prisoners, and that the whole would be attributed to his carelessness, he drew his sword, and was just going to kill himself. What could have induced him to meditate so rash an act? He knew that the laws of the Romans were so severe, that any carelessness of this kind might have cost him his life, and so he appears to have been unwilling to encounter the disgrace. Poor man! he did not know that if he had taken his own life, he

must have been lost for ever. However, Paul prevented his completing this rash act, for he cried out to him with a loud voice, "do thyself no harm—for we are all here;" nobody has escaped, you have no reason to be alarmed for your life.

Now it appears that God made use of these singular circumstances, to impress the jailer with a sense of his own dreadful condition as a sinner. The prison doors were open, and yet no one had escaped—he was about to kill himself, and yet was prevented by the very person whom he had used so harshly. The Holy Spirit pressed all these things upon his mind, and brought him under the deepest convictions of sin. Under these feelings he called for a light, and trembling under the view which he had of his guilt and danger, seized the light, and sprung in and came trembling, and fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, and with the deepest anxiety said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" There never has been, and there never can be, but one great and solemn answer to that question; and the same answer is, of course, to be given to every inquiring soul, no matter in what

country, or under what circumstances, the inquiry may be made. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." From the brief history which is given, it would appear, that when the jailer ran in where Paul and Silas were, that all his family, either noticing his consternation, or being alarmed by what had occurred previously, followed him, and heard him put the question, and receive the answer which have been just mentioned; for we are told, that Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house," that is, when the family had been thus providentially assembled, the Apostles took that opportunity of calling them to an acceptance of the Gospel terms of salvation; and the influence of God's Spirit seems so remarkably to have accompanied the word preached, that not only the jailer but his family were converted.

If it is asked, how are we to know that the jailer and his family were converted, there is an answer ready. We have the testimony of the conduct of the jailer, and the testimony of God's own declaration. 1. The jailer took the Apostles immediately into his own apart-

ments in the prison; he washed their stripes—sat meat before them, and was baptized, he and his. And 2. We have the testimony of God; for in the 34th verse of the sixteenth chapter of Acts, which contains the account of these transactions, the history of the jailer concludes with this striking observation, he *rejoiced*, “*believing* in God, with all his house.”

All these things occurred in one night; and truly it was a night of wonders, in which God displayed his care for his servants—his power in the earthquake, and his grace in the conversion of the jailer and his family.

When the morning came, the magistrates appear to have become somewhat alarmed at their unjust proceedings, for they had condemned Paul and Silas without the least shadow of reason. To hush up the matter, as they supposed, they sent the sergeants or under-officers to tell the jailer that he might let the prisoners go. The keeper of the jail carried the message to Paul and Silas, and advised them to depart, and take the liberty to which they were restored. But Paul judged that it would not be for the honour of the cause of Christ to let the matter rest. He said,

"They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." They conceived, that if they went away from the prison quietly, it would be a kind of acknowledgment that they had been justly used. So Paul said to the officers who were sent to release them, we will not go upon these terms; we have been shamefully treated and abused, and all without any cause; we are determined that our innocence shall be publicly acknowledged by the very persons who have put us into prison—they must come and take us out themselves. Paul took care to let them know that they were Romans, that is, as we have stated, Paul being a native of Tarsus, had the privilege of a Roman citizen. As soon as the magistrates heard that Paul was a Roman citizen, they were as much frightened as they had before been insolent; and they had good reason, for Cicero, a great Roman lawyer, tells us, in a very celebrated oration of his against a tyrannical governor of Sicily, who had shamefully treated a person named *Gavius*, that by

the laws, called the Porcian and Sempronian laws, a Roman citizen could neither be bound nor beaten. These laws the magistrates had grossly violated, and Paul knew it, and he used this knowledge to make them come and confess his innocence. We find that they did this; they came and *besought* Paul and Silas, that is pleaded with them, that they would forget and forgive the insult which they had received. The Apostles had no malice, all they wanted was that their characters should be vindicated; and when this was done, they freely forgave all that had happened; and at the earnest solicitation of the magistrates, they consented to go out of the city. The business for which they went to Philippi had been accomplished. They had preached the Gospel there, and the very circumstances of their imprisonment, the earthquake, the conversion of the jailer, and finally the acknowledgment of the officers themselves, all operated in favour of the Christian religion, and rendered their stay less necessary. After they were brought out of the prison by the magistrates, in this public and honourable way, they entered into the house of Lydia, where

they had been previously so hospitably entertained, and after they had met with certain persons who are called brethren, and comforted them, and encouraged them, they departed from that city where they had suffered so much, and yet where they had found so much cause of rejoicing in the prosperity of the work of the Lord. From this visit, a church was founded, the members of which are addressed by St. Paul in his epistle to the *Philippians*, which he afterwards wrote to them from Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing an account of St. Paul's mission, from the time that he left Philippi, until he arrived at Athens.

IN any other cause than that of the Lord, and in any other persons than those so zealously engaged in the work of the Lord, it would seem as if the circumstances which took place at Philippi might have been sufficient to produce complete discouragement. But it seemed rather to inflame the zeal of the holy men of God, who were engaged in

this earliest missionary work. When the Apostles went from Philippi, they stopped for a moment at a place called *Amphipolis*. This town had been built about five hundred years, but had never risen to be a place of much consequence. The name signifies the "city of both;" and it took this name from the singular circumstance, that the river Strymon, which separated *Macedonia* from *Thrace*, completely surrounded it; so that, although it actually belonged to *Macedonia*, it seemed built on the boundary between *both* these divisions. It is at present called Emboli, by the Turks. It does not appear that the Apostles preached here, but merely passed through it. The same appears to be true of *Apollo-nia*, of which nothing important is recorded, except that Augustus Cæsar, who was emperor of Rome when our Saviour was born, had, in his youth, gone to school in this place, for the purpose of learning the Greek language. The first place of any consequence where the Apostles stopped, was a city called *Thessalonica*, a very large and populous city, and worthy of being particularly noticed, because here a church was founded. Thessa-

lonica was the largest city of Macedonia. It was beautifully situated at the head of a gulf, which bore the same name, and which makes up, in a northern direction, from the Archipelago. The city is said to have been ten or thirteen miles in extent, and must have contained a great number of inhabitants. Not a great many years ago, there were in that city thirty Christian churches, and thirty-six synagogues of the Jews, besides forty-eight mosques, or Turkish houses of worship; and many of these mosques had been Christian churches. One of them, which was a noble building, once supported by beautiful columns of marble, porphyry and jasper, and called the church of St. Demetrius, was supposed to have been built where the house stood in which St. Paul preached. In the year of our Lord 1430, exactly four hundred years ago, it was taken by the Turks, and like every thing else under the Turkish dominion, has been ever since going to decay. In the time of the Apostle, however, which was 1778 years ago, you may judge, that it was in a very flourishing condition.

It was to this distinguished and populous

city, that Paul went from Philippi. There was a Jewish synagogue there, and Paul, according to his custom, went into this synagogue and preached to the congregation out of the Scriptures for three Sabbath-days successively, proving to them that Jesus was the Christ or Messiah; and that, according to their own Scriptures, it was necessary that he should suffer death, and rise again from the dead. It appears from the history, that some of the Jews were converted to the faith of Christ, and also a great number of the Greeks, and many of the first females of the city. But the rest of the Jews, being instigated by envy, and a false zeal for the religion of Moses, gathered together a parcel of idle and wicked men of notoriously bad character, and raising a tumult, set all the city in an uproar, and went to the house of Jason, where Paul lodged, for the purpose of abusing, and perhaps killing him. Providentially, they could not find the Apostles, but they took Jason, and some christian friends, to the magistrates, and made a complaint that he had harboured these disturbers of the peace; for they called the Apostles men who had turned the

world upside down. They accused Paul of wanting to spread treason, and doing things contrary to the laws of the empire, by preaching that Jesus was a King; and the magistrates appear to have been not a little alarmed at this outcry, and they made Jason and the others give security for their good behaviour, as they supposed them implicated. It was, however, deemed a measure of prudence, that Paul and Silas should leave Thessalonica; and so the converted brethren there, sent them by night on their way to Berea. Though St. Paul had been but a little while at Thessalonica, the fruits of his labours there were glorious and lasting. His two epistles to the church in that city, show that the Gospel prevailed and triumphed in the midst of all the opposition. He speaks of the christians there in higher terms than of any others elsewhere; for he thus writes in one of his epistles to them; "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; having received the word in much affection, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, your faith to God-ward is spread abroad." How are the hands of ministers strengthened, and their hearts comforted, when they can give such an account of their people!

By some learned writers, it is supposed, that the epistle of Paul to the Galatians was written either somewhere on his way to Thessalonica, or during his short stay there. This idea is founded on the expression, which he uses in the second verse of the first chapter of that epistle, namely, that he not only wrote in his own name, but in the name of "the brethren who were with him." As Silas and Timothy had been with him when he was in Galatia, the epistle was probably written before he was separated from them. Be this as it may, it is most likely that the epistle to the Galatians was written somewhere about this time, and that one object of the Apostle was to vindicate his own character and pretensions against the aspersions of a false teacher who had crept in, and was trying to undermine the respect and veneration in which Paul

was held. But the great design of the Apostle was to prove the doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, against the false teaching of those who held up the necessity of obedience to the law of Moses, as necessary to establish their acceptance with God. This epistle, with that to the Romans, forms one of the most complete treatises which the world has ever seen, proving, beyond the possibility of cavil, that *justification* is a *free gift*, proceeding entirely from the mercy of God, and not to be bought by obedience to the law of Moses, or any other law, but to be received from God, through the instrumentality of a living faith. On the supposition that this epistle was written from Thessalonica, it shows the zeal of the Apostle for the cause of God, which could induce him to take the pains to write a letter containing such deep thought and argument, even in the midst of persecution.

We have seen that Paul and Silas went to Berea, and Timothy soon followed. Berea is not very far from Thessalonica, in the same province, viz., Macedonia. Very little is anywhere said of this place. According to custom, Paul went, as soon as possible, into the

synagogue to preach Christ. The sacred historian, Luke, gives a much higher character of the Jews of Berea than of those of Thessalonica; for he says, that they received the word with readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to ascertain whether what Paul preached to them about Christ as the Messiah was true. In consequence of thus searching the Scriptures, many of them believed, not only Jews, but Greeks of high rank, both men and women.

Searching the Scriptures daily, and with ardent prayer to God for the teaching of the Spirit, is the only true method of becoming acquainted with the contents of the sacred volume. It was the exhortation of our Saviour to the Jews of his time, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." We wish that every reader of this book could indeed say, from the bottom of his heart, when he thinks of his Bible,

"O may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight;
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.

"Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,
Be thou for ever near:
Teach me to love thy sacred word,
And view my Saviour there."

But the labours of St. Paul were soon closed at Berea, for he was followed by the storm which had been raised at Thessalonica. The Jews of this latter place, when they found out that Paul was successfully employed at Berea, took the trouble to go there, and stirred up a violent commotion. It was therefore necessary for him, once more, to consult his safety by flight, though Silas and Timothy, as being less obnoxious, ventured to continue there for a time, that they might carry on the work of God. Thus, the opposition, as before, contributed to a more extensive propagation of the Gospel, and Satan defeated his own purposes.

Those who had undertaken to escort Paul, used a stratagem, by which his enemies were prevented from waylaying him. They made as though they would go down to the sea, that is the Egean sea, near which Berea was, and this they did to make their enemies suppose that they meant to put him on board of some vessel, and send him away by water. Instead of doing this, however, they all went

on foot as far as Athens, which was a long journey in those days, hardly less, we suppose, than two hundred miles. As soon as the brethren had seen him safe in Athens, they returned to Berea, being requested by St. Paul to tell Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible. The history of the residence of Paul at Athens contains so many curious and interesting circumstances, that we shall make it the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

Paul at Athens.

As Athens has always been considered one of the most distinguished cities in the world, our readers will naturally expect that we should give some account of it, before we relate what there occurred to Paul.

Athens lies on the Saronic gulf, opposite to the eastern coast of what is called the Peloponnesus. It was built on a peninsula, formed by the junction of two rivers, one called the Cephissus, and the other the Ilissus. This

city was begun by Cecrops, about 1550 years before the birth of our Saviour, and in the most ancient times it was called Cecropia. Under the government of Erichthonius, the name was changed to Athens, in honour of the heathen goddess Minerva, for in Greek her name is called *Athena*. The Turks call it *Athiniah*, and sometimes *Sestines*. The old city was built on the top of some rocks, which lie in the midst of a wide and beautiful plain. It was about fifteen miles from the sea, but was connected with three fine harbours on the sea, by walls of great extent and strength. What most distinguished it, however, was, that it was the seat of learning; multitudes of the wisest of the old philosophers lived and taught there. Besides this, it was remarkable for its buildings, which for perfection of architecture, and elegance of appearance, have never been rivalled. The buildings which were in and about Athens have been the admiration of every succeeding age, and, though now mostly in ruins, are truly astonishing. These buildings have formed models for other buildings all over the world, and in the city of Philadelphia, the bank of the United States, and the

bank of Pennsylvania, and St. Andrew's church, are built after different Greek models. Athens lately contained 1300 houses, 12,000 inhabitants, 2000 of whom were Turks. Since the late political changes have taken place, Greece will probably be once more in a measure a free country, after having been four hundred years under the Turkish dominion; and Athens may again become the seat of arts, and sciences, and literature, and, better than them all, the seat of the Christian religion.

Now let us return to Paul. It will be remembered, that after the difficulty at Berea, certain brethren accompanied him to Athens, and when they returned they carried a message from him to Silas and Timothy, for them to come immediately to him. At this place the history of Paul at Athens commences. We are told, that while he waited for these brethren, "his spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given up to idolatry;" that is, he was greatly disturbed when he saw into what miserable ignorance and foolishness these people were sunk, though they thought themselves to be wiser than all the world beside. How true is the declaration

in relation to all those who know not the true God, that "esteeming themselves to be wise they became fools." We need not wonder that Paul was disturbed, when we consider, that they worshipped in Athens, as it is said, 30,000 gods. Paul, of course, could not be silent in the midst of such a state of things, but he did not proceed rashly. He was wise and prudent, and he made use only of all the lawful opportunities which presented themselves. In the first place, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue of his own countrymen, the Jews, his "kinsmen after the flesh," as he delights to call them; and there he calmly reasoned with them about the truth of the Christian religion. We are told also of "devout persons" being present at these times. By these devout persons is meant, those individuals, from among the heathen, who had become proselytes to the Jewish religion, who had abandoned the worship of their dumb idols, and worshipped the true God of Israel with the Jews; but who, like the Jews, knew nothing of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation through him. But besides this, Paul went every day to the market-place, a place of gene-

ral assemblage in that city, because there a great number of people were always collected, some on business, and many merely because they had not much to do, but were fond of going where they would find a multitude of others to talk to. As he continued doing this, for several days in succession, it, of course, made a considerable stir and noise in that city, and at last, some of the philosophers, or wise men, thought they would come and hear what he had to say. These philosophers belonged to two different parties, one called Epicureans, and the other Stoics. But before we go on with the history of Paul, our young readers, especially, would like to know something about these two sects of philosophers. The Epicureans were so called from a man by the name of Epicurus, who was born 342 years before our Saviour, and taught philosophy at Athens in his own delightful garden. Among the false and absurd notions which he taught, and his followers believed, was, that the world was not made by any Deity, but all came by chance, jumbled together in some strange way, they knew not how; that God did not govern the world by his providence; that every thing was

left to take care of itself; that the soul did not live after the body was dead; that there were no future rewards or punishments, and that the chief happiness of man lies in pleasure. The Stoics did not take their name from that of their founder. His name was Zeno. They took their name from the Greek word *stoa*, which signifies a portico, or a piazza, because it was under a portico that Zeno used to walk, and teach his disciples, by conversing with them. The Stoics did profess to believe in the being of a God, but they supposed him to be corporeal, that is, to be somewhat like a man, with body, and hands, and feet; they did not believe that this God could do as he pleased, but that he was bound by what they called *fate* or necessity. They professed to practise morality, but were beyond all measure proud and haughty, actuated by principles inconsistent with the meek and humble religion of our blessed Saviour. These were the mighty wise men in their own conceits, who thought they would come and hear what Paul had to say for himself and cause. We are told that they "encountered him;" that is, they attacked him, and disputed with him on some points which

were contrary to their philosophy. Nothing in the world could have shown greater contempt than the name which they bestowed on Paul. "What will this *babbler* say?" We understand by the word *babbler*, one who talks a great deal, to little or no purpose. But the Greeks meant a great deal more by it than this. The word *babbler*, in their language, means a *gatherer of seeds*, and was applied to those idle people who were in the habit of attending markets and fairs, for the purpose of picking up the seeds of corn which happened to fall out of the bags, and upon these they lived; and so the word came to be used for an idle, good-for-nothing fellow, who picked up stories and lies, and carried them about to tell, for a livelihood. This is what some of these wise men called Paul. There were others among them, who said, "He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods," that is, different gods from what are worshipped at Athens; and they judged this, because he preached to them Jesus, and the resurrection. They probably supposed that Paul wanted to add the name of Jesus to the list of their 30,000 gods, so that they might have another object of worship. It was on

this account, probably, that they wished him to go to what was called Areopagus, that, they said, they might know what those things meant. With this wish he very cheerfully complied, as it would give him the opportunity of preaching the Gospel before the very greatest men in Athens.

CHAPTER X.

Paul before the Areopagus at Athens.

THE Areopagus was the oldest of the Athenian courts of justice ; and it was, at the same time, one of the most distinguished for its respectability, purity, and love of justice. It derived its name from the place where its members assembled, called the "Hill of Mars," which is a translation of the Greek word "Areopagus." This hill was a rocky eminence, in the centre of the city, very near the celebrated Temple of Minerva. The causes which were tried before this court, were murder, poison, robbery, arson, bad morals, and innovations in the state, and in religion. Because this court had the juris-

diction of all crimes against religion, it has been supposed, by some, that Paul was carried before it to be tried. But there is no good reason to think this, for throughout the whole of the relation, as it is given in the Acts, there is no appearance whatever of a trial. We read neither of accusers nor judges, nor does Paul argue as if he was defending himself against any charge. The only reasonable account of the matter is, that the philosophers who gathered round him found it inconvenient to listen to him in so great a crowd as was assembled in the market-place; and they, therefore, brought him to an eminence on the Mars' hill, where the principal persons were assembled, and where they might listen to him without interruption, or noise. It was on this spot, and surrounded by one of the most noble and learned audiences in the world then, that Paul delivered one of his most masterly addresses. "Ye men of Athens," said he, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." The word superstitious is now used only in a bad sense, that is, we mean by it, that persons who are superstitious are addicted to very foolish, and absurd, and ridicu-

lous opinions and practices on the subject of religion. The words used by Paul, for he spoke to them in the Greek language, did not convey exactly that meaning; and, as his oration was very mild and conciliating, we have no reason to believe that he meant any more than to convey the idea, that the Athenians were very remarkably and unusually given to their religious services. The same character of that people is given by some heathen writers. He goes on to say, as I passed by, and beheld the devotions of the people, among the many altars erected to different gods, "I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Now this shows that you are excessively devoted to your religion, when you even worship gods of whose names and qualities you thus confess yourselves ignorant. It is supposed by some, that by the term "The Unknown God," the philosophic Athenians actually did mean the God of the Jews; for as He had no name like their false gods, and was not worshipped by statues and images, they had no other way of describing him. As there was in Athens a synagogue of the Jews, they could easily have obtained some idea of

the God of Israel, and as Isaiah says, "verily thou art a God that *hidest* thyself, O God of Israel," it is very probable that, according to their foolish notions, they erected an altar to the God of the Jews, whom they knew not, and thought that was sufficient. It would appear, that Paul had some impression of this kind, for he immediately says, "whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." He then proceeds to lay before them several of the great truths of religion; beginning with the character of the great Creator:—"God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our

being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring." Now, as the object of Paul was to convince them that their idolatry was foolish and absurd, he uses the language of this poet, whose name was Aratus, and tells them, if we then are the children of God, because he created us, we ought to know better than to "think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device." He tells them, however, that these times of former ignorance "God winked at;" not that he approved their ignorance, but that he saw fit to overlook it, and not to punish them; but that *now* was the time when all this forbearance would be brought to a close, and when he required of all men every where to repent and turn from their sins, to serve the only living and true God. To repent, therefore, of all their sins, idolatry and every thing else which God hated, was the subject to which Paul applied his oration; and lest they should be deceived, and not think the matter so important as he had represented it, he proceeds to tell them of the day of judgment. "For God hath appointed a day," says he, "in which he will judge the world

in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained ; and of this, God has given assurance to all, in that he has raised him from the dead. Paul's remarks, about the resurrection of Christ from the dead, gave the Epicureans a good chance to interrupt him. They had been very much annoyed by his reasoning on the subject of the absurdity of their idolatry, but as he took what some of their own poets had said, they could raise no plausible objection against it. The doctrine of the resurrection, however, attacked their *peculiar* opinions, for they denied it ; and for fear of being put in the back ground, by his superior reasoning, they began to mock and to ridicule ; and then others, most probably the Stoics, who did not think exactly with the Epicureans, said they would hear him some other time about these matters.

We do not know that Paul had any other opportunity of speaking to these men. The probability is that he had not. But we here observe the truth of God's own declaration, that his "word shall never return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it." We are told of the conversion of some

of the company of hearers ; among whom was one of the members of this celebrated court of Areopagus, named Dionysius ; a woman named Damaris, and others, neither the number nor the names of whom are mentioned, but that they boldly took part with the Apostle, and believed in the Lord Jesus.

It may be profitable to call the attention of our readers, for a moment, to the zeal and fidelity, mingled with the judgment and discretion of Paul, in his various addresses to persons under different circumstances. While he keeps back nothing of the counsel of God, he tries to suit himself to the capacity and habits of those whom he addresses. And the same remark holds good of all his epistles. With the Jews he constantly alludes to some principles of their own belief, and endeavours to overcome their prejudices against christianity, by explaining to them the spiritual intention of their own law, and by referring them to the declarations of their own prophets. With the Gentiles, on the contrary, he begins by asserting those simple and evident truths which must be acknowledged by all ; and having paved the way, he gradually introduces

the leading principles of the Gospel; taking care, however, in every address, and in every epistle, never to omit, on any single occasion, the full proclamation of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Some of the earliest missionaries of modern times, committed the error of beginning among the heathens only with those truths which may be called the general principles of all true religion, and desiring to establish those principles firmly before they directed the attention of their hearers to Jesus Christ. The consequence of this was, that for many years no converts were made. It was only when Jesus Christ was presented, on every occasion, as the Saviour of sinners, that multitudes began to inquire what they should do to be saved. The method of Paul was not to neglect these general principles, but to state them plainly and briefly, and then, without insisting on them as the topics from which he expected especial good to be derived, to pass on to the doctrine of Christ crucified, and there to rest his hopes of success.

CHAPTER XI.

Paul at Corinth—Obliged to work for his support—Is met by Silas and Timothy—brought before Gallio, and, after a short time, goes to Jerusalem; thus finishing his second Missionary Tour.

It is probable that Paul remained at Athens a very short time after his celebrated speech at the Areopagus. From Athens he went to Corinth, which is about twenty-five miles west of that city, and is built on a narrow isthmus between the Egean and Ionian seas. It is not, and never was, a very large place, though very much distinguished, especially for its wickedness. When Paul came to this place, he met with a Jew by the name of Aquila, who, with his wife Priscilla, had been banished from Rome, together with all other Jews, by an order from the emperor Claudius. As Paul appears at this time to have been in a very destitute condition, he sought a residence with these persons, because they followed the

same business for a livelihood in which he had been instructed in his youth, viz., tent-making. In this humble employment he worked, and thus was able to maintain himself. To work at any employment, provided it is honest, is no discredit to any person. But though Paul was in such poor circumstances in Corinth, as to be compelled to labour for his daily bread, he did not forget the peculiar object of his mission; and we are told, that "he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." While he was engaged in these various duties, Silas and Timothy returned from Macedonia; and hearing the accounts which they gave, Paul became more and more earnest in his preaching in the synagogue, testifying to the people that Jesus was the Christ, and exhorting them to accept of his salvation. Many, however, opposed themselves to these truths, and blasphemed, so much so that Paul felt constrained to go away from the synagogue and preach there no more. We are told that "he shook his raiment," which is agreeable to what our Saviour had commanded in Matthew, chapter 10, verse 14, "and said unto them, your

blood be upon your own heads," that is, you are the authors of your own destruction, "I am clean;" meaning, that he had discharged his duty as a faithful preacher, and so had delivered his own soul. This is all that a minister can do—be faithful in the declaration of the truth of God; and then, if the people will not repent, he is not to blame. This whole matter is very fully stated in the 33d chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet.

When Paul had given his last faithful warning to the members of the synagogue, he went away, not from Corinth, but from among the Jews, and took his future residence with a Gentile by the name of Justus, who lived close by the synagogue. This Justus appears to have been a man very much like the centurion Cornelius, who is mentioned in the 10th chapter of the Acts. Here Paul remained, as we are told, a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them; that is, not among the Jews in their synagogue, but among those Jews and Gentiles who appear to have been willing to listen and be profited.

Paul's preaching in the synagogue, however, was not without effect. The chief ruler, by

the name of Crispus, was converted, and all his family; and many of the Corinthians, hearing these things, were induced to attend on the preaching of Paul. Numbers of them also were converted and were baptized. We are not expressly told, in the history, that Paul had as yet suffered any violent persecution in this city of Corinth, though it is fair to infer that he did; because it is recorded, the Lord Jesus Christ came to him in a vision by night, and said, "be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." It is supposed, that during the period of this year and a half, Paul wrote his first and second epistles to the Thessalonians; the object of the first of which was to supply the converts at Thessalonica with arguments against the attacks of the philosophers and men of learning. The object of the second epistle, was to refute an error into which the Thessalonian Christians had fallen, as to the immediate coming of the day of judgment.

While Paul was thus actively engaged in the cause of his Master, the Jews again en-

deavoured to bring him into trouble. They brought him to the judgment-seat of Gallio, who was deputy of Achaia, for Achaia was that province of the Roman empire of which Corinth was the capital. Gallio would hear nothing on the subject, and therefore instantly dismissed the parties. He considered the Jews and their law, the Apostle and his Gospel, as all beneath his notice, and he left them to settle, as they chose, what he considered a frivolous contention. The sacred history tells us, "he cared for none of those things." If we may give credit to the accounts of Roman authors, Gallio was a man eminent for his talents and literary attainments. He was brother of Seneca, the famous moralist, and under the emperors Claudius and Nero acted as deputy-governor of Achaia. Not many years after the event here related, Gallio and his brother were murdered by order of Nero. His character is usually represented as amiable. His conduct on the occasion just mentioned deserves a mixture of applause and censure. His liberal turn of mind was evinced, by his refusal to punish Paul for his religious opinions merely, and his willingness to permit the Jews

to think as they pleased, and to settle their disputes among themselves. We must, however, strongly blame the contempt and indifference with which he appeared to treat subjects of such great importance, as that truth which God has revealed, and that salvation for which Jesus, the Son of God, laid down his life. He was also to blame for suffering violence to be done in his presence as a magistrate; for he let the Greeks beat Sosthenes, whose only fault appears to be that he had favoured Paul.

Paul remained, however, in Corinth some time longer, notwithstanding this strong opposition. It was not the mere clamour of his enemies that could hasten his departure. When the time came, he took with him his two friends Aquila and Priscilla; and we are told, that at Cenchrea, a neighbouring port, from which he set sail, he shaved his head, according to a certain vow which he had made, probably for some great deliverance. When they arrived at Ephesus, he preached the word with his accustomed zeal, but soon left his dear companions there, though they wished him to continue. He "conferred not with flesh and blood," but pressed on with ardor wherever his

duty seemed to call him. He hastened to Jerusalem with charitable contributions to the church, and having made a report to the brethren there assembled, and finished the purpose of his return, he went to Antioch in Syria, where he staid some time.

During his absence from Ephesus, there came there a Jew, from Alexandria in Egypt, named Apollos, who appears to have been thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament scriptures; and, as far as we can judge, had been impressed with the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus, as the subject had been proclaimed by John the Baptist. He probably was a convert to some of the disciples of John. He preached his doctrine boldly in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla having heard of him, taught him more fully in the doctrine of Jesus the Saviour; and when he was desirous of going away, they gave him letters of introduction to the Christian brethren. He appears to have produced considerable impression on the Jews; for we are told, that he "mightily convinced" them, "publicly shewing, by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ."

CHAPTER XII.

Paul's third Missionary Tour—Principally confined to Ephesus.

WE mentioned in the last chapter, Paul's return to Jerusalem, and his subsequent visit to Antioch. After remaining a short time in Antioch, he set out on his third missionary tour. He first hastily passed through Phrygia and Galatia, and then went to Ephesus, which he made his missionary station, and the principal scene of his labours.

Ephesus was formerly one of the most distinguished cities of Asia Minor. It was situated on the river Cayster, which falls into the Egean sea. It is supposed, by some, to have been built as early as the days of David, king of Israel. It was most famous for the Temple of Diana, which is said to have been 425 feet long, 220 broad, with a roof supported by 127 pillars, each 70 feet high. This temple was burned down 360 years before the time of our Saviour, but rebuilt.

One of the most remarkable incidents which happened to Paul at Ephesus, was his meeting with some of the disciples of John the Baptist. None of the evangelists mention anything about the disciples of John the Baptist, after the imprisonment and death of their Master. It is more than probable, that the greater part of them became the followers of our Lord; for John had instructed them so to do. It is very likely, however, that before John's death, some of them had left Palestine, and gone into various countries, carrying with them only the imperfect knowledge which they had derived from John. It would appear from the history, that on Paul's going to Ephesus, he met there several of these disciples; and in conversing with them, he found that they had only received this imperfect instruction—that they knew nothing about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. After being instructed by Paul, he baptized them in the name of Christ, and laying his hands on them, imparted to them the miraculous power of speaking in various languages, and they were thus enabled to preach Jesus Christ. In Ephesus, Paul preached regularly about three

months in the Jewish synagogue; but at last, in consequence of their hardness of heart and unbelief, he left them, and continued to preach in the school-house of a person named Tyrannus; and here he continued for two years, and was eminently successful.

God wrought many signal miracles by the hands of Paul. His fame became very great, and to those who could not come to him from a distance, were taken handkerchiefs or aprons, and their diseases were cured, and the evil spirits were driven out. There were, at this time, in Ephesus, certain wandering Jews, who obtained their living by going from place to place, and pretending to tell fortunes, cure diseases by using charms, and drive out evil spirits by conjuration. They were called exorcists. These persons, observing that Paul was able to work miracles in the name of Jesus, attempted to do the same. Among those who were most shameless and impudent in this business, were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew. In their impious attempt, they came near losing their lives, for a man whom they attempted to cure of evil spirits nearly killed them.


The defeat of these pretenders and impostors, was the means of attracting greater notice towards the Apostle and his doctrine ; and, eventually, many were converted. As soon as this took place, they brought all the wicked books which told about charms and incantations, and such impious fooleries, and burned them. The value of the books which they burned was 50,000 pieces of silver. When the power of the Gospel is felt, every profane practice will be renounced, and even the love of money will be subdued. One or two questions here will not be misplaced. Have we given any such proof of our submission to Jesus Christ as these believers did ? Are we willing to forsake those occupations and habits which, though profitable, cannot be retained with a good conscience towards God ? Ah ! how many reject the word of God, and perish eternally, because they are determined to hold fast their wicked practices, or their unjust-gains.

After these things had happened, which we have just recorded, Paul felt desirous to go through Macedonia and Achaia ; and he determined also, if the will of God should be

so, to go to Rome, after he had been once more to Jerusalem. As he could not, however, leave Ephesus at this time, he determined to send two of his disciples, Timothy and Erastus, to several places in Macedonia and Achaia. It is supposed that he despatched at this time his first epistle to the Corinthians, which discusses a great variety of very important points; and which, also, contains that wonderful chapter on the subject of the resurrection.

The stay which Paul made in Ephesus, had nearly been fatal; for shortly after the departure of Timothy and Erastus, one Demetrius, a silversmith, excited a popular commotion. The silversmiths had been in the habit of earning a great deal of money, by making silver *shrines*; that is, little temples made of silver, in imitation of the Temple of Diana, and selling them to the people. The preaching and miracles of Paul had injured this idolatrous business; and, of course, the persons who had been in the habit of making money this way were angry. When they came together, Demetrius thus addressed them: "Sirs, ye know that by this craft, we

have our wealth : so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought ; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The idea that their temple would be despised, and the goddess Diana no more worshipped, excited the indignation of the multitude to the highest pitch, and they cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." This riot, which does not appear to have been very extensive at first, soon gathered the greater part of the people. The city became all confusion ; and the people having seized hold of Aristarchus and Gaius, two of Paul's travelling companions, hurried them away to the theatre. This was the place where the public plays were acted in honour of the goddess Diana ; and also, where men were sometimes set to fight with wild beasts. It is more than likely that it was in allusion to some such uproar, that Paul says, "if after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus."



Paul does not appear, however, to have been present when this uproar began, but as soon as he heard of it, he wanted to go to the theatre, to speak to the people. His friends would not permit this, and he remained away. The meeting which took place in the theatre was nothing but confusion. No one knew what they came for—some cried one thing and some another. There was one Alexander, who was thrust forward, and attempted to speak; but as soon as the multitude knew that he was a Jew, they sat up a shout, and continued for about two hours, crying out nothing but "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." At last, however, a person who is called the town clerk, induced them to listen to him. He made a speech, in which he first flattered the Ephesians about their goddess Diana, and then defended Aristarchus and Gaius, for he said, they had not been speaking against Diana: and then he very sensibly observed, that if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen had any cause against any one, they ought to prosecute them regularly at the court of the deputies. He then tells them, that the present was an unlawful assembly, and that if

they did not take care, the Romans might punish them for a riot. This speech had the desired effect—they appear to have been alarmed, and the assembly was quietly dismissed. And it was thus that Paul and the brethren were delivered from apparent danger by the providence of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

Paul leaves Ephesus—Troas—Death and restoration of Eutychus—Miletus—Address to the elders of Ephesus—Voyage and journey back to Jerusalem—Close of third Missionary Tour.

FROM the accounts which have been given in the last chapter, it appears that Paul was induced, by a proper prudence, to retire from Ephesus; and, after having taken an affectionate leave of his disciples, he directed his course to Macedonia. Ever intent upon his duty, he preached and exhorted from place to place, and thus passed on to the southern part of Greece. Here he abode three months, and

as he was about to sail for Syria, his life was in danger, by the malice of the Jews, who watched some opportunity to destroy him. To prevent this, he altered his course, and took a circuit by land, as far as Philippi, whence he sailed to Troas; Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timotheus, Tychichus, and Trophimus, all of them devoted followers of the Lord, having gone there to meet the Apostle. In this place he remained seven days, and on the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, or Sunday, as it is otherwise called, he addressed the disciples at Troas. As he was about to depart the next day, the religious services were continued to an unusual length, even until midnight. It would seem strange in our days, to have our religious meetings so long continued; and, on ordinary occasions, it would not be at all advisable. In seasons of religious revival, however, when there are manifest indications of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, it may sometimes be necessary to devote more than the usual time to devotional and other religious exercises. The more deeply our hearts are affected with divine things, and the stronger our impressions be-

come of the love of Christ, the more eager shall we become both to hear and declare the truths of the Gospel. The men of the world may wonder and revile ; but while they devote days and weeks to the pursuit of vain pleasures, we ought not to think a few hours too much to devote to exercises of a spiritual character, and to the service of our God. The christians at Troas, we are told, assembled in an upper chamber, which was in the third story. In the window, there sat a young man, named Eutychus, who, either because he was inattentive, or from some reason which the history does not mention, became so overpowered with sleep, that he fell down to the ground, and was taken up dead. This circumstance naturally produced confusion and distress ; till Paul restored him to life, by the miraculous power which had been given him. It is wicked to be so inattentive to the preached word, as to fall asleep in church, and it is highly disrespectful to God.

After the restoration of the young man, Paul went on with his discourse, even to the break of day, and then he commenced his journey, which he pursued on foot, as far as

Assos, a few miles from Troas. At Assos, which was a sea-port opposite the island of Lesbos, in the Egean sea, he took passage in the vessel in which several of his friends had started from Troas, and went over to Mitylene, which is the capital of the island of Lesbos, and situated on a peninsula, on the eastern side. The next day, they passed the island of Chios, now called Scio, that ill-fated island, which suffered so much from the Turks during their last war with the Greeks. The next day, after passing Scio, they arrived at the island of Samos, and passed over to the main land, to a place called Trogyllium, which was situated on a point of land which projected into the sea, westward towards Samos. The next day they reached Miletus, which was a sea-port town of that division of Asia Minor called Caria ; of which it was the capital. As Paul was in haste to get to Jerusalem by a certain time, he purposely passed by Ephesus, without stopping, but as he was very anxious to see the principal persons of the church at Ephesus, he sent for them to come to him at Miletus, which they could easily do, as the distance was only about twenty miles. The

Apostle wished to see the elders of this church, that he might give them his parting charge and benediction. When they arrived, he addressed them in the following most faithful and affectionate language. Nothing could be more tender, sincere, and affecting. It is an address which surpasses the highest strains of heathen eloquence. It is the language of a Christian. To the assembled elders of that church, in whose cause he had laboured and suffered so much, he says,—“Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the laying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions

abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance

among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. We do not feel surprised at their great distress, when we consider that they were assured they were to see him no more, and that he was going to persecution and to death.

The elders of the Ephesian church, however, would not part with the beloved Apostle here ; they accompanied him to the vessel to take their final leave of him whom they would never see again.

The Apostle, with his travelling friends, set sail from Miletus, and first touched at the island of Coos, which was opposite the south-

west extremity of the main land of Asia Minor. From thence they passed, the day after, to Rhodes, which is a large and distinguished island of the Mediterranean: and from thence to Patara, a sea-port on the main land, in the province of Lycia. Here they took passage in another vessel, bound to Phenicia; and having passed by the island of Cyprus, on the south side, they arrived at ancient Tyre, a sea-port of Phenicia. This was once one of the most famous cities in the world, for its wealth and commerce, and is connected with a great many interesting incidents of Scripture history.* As the ship in which Paul and his brethren were passengers was to take in a load at this place, they had the opportunity of remaining seven days, which they did not regret, as they found several christians there. In the city of Tyre, some of the christians, acting under a prophetic impulse, warned Paul of his danger, and intreated him not to go to Jerusalem. But, being confident that duty called him, he did not shrink from his purpose. The christians of Tyre showed

* See Bible Dictionary, published by the Am. S. S. U.

great affection for Paul, with their wives and children; they went with him out of the city to the place of shipping. There they kneeled down on the shore, and the Apostle again prayed with them. He took ship, and landed at Ptolemais, a town now called Acre, where they remained but one day. The object of stopping at this place, seems merely to see the Christian brethren there. From this place, Paul and his company went to Cesarea, where they became the guests of Philip the deacon.

At this place he remained a considerable length of time, and received express information of the difficulties and dangers which awaited him. A prophet, named Agabus, came from Judea to Cesarea to see Paul; and, as it was customary in those days, for prophets to express their meaning, by actions which are called symbolical, Agabus took Paul's girdle, and put it round his own hands and feet, and then said, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."—As may be supposed, after this, Paul was most earnestly desired by his

companions, as well as the brethren at Cesarea, to give up his intention of going to Jerusalem. But as no dangers could intimidate his mind, he would not yield to their intreaties. It is truly affecting to observe his distress, when he finds them overwhelmed with grief on his account. "What," says he, "do ye mean to weep, and break mine heart?—for I am ready not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." This showed that he was possessed of the tenderest affections, and that he determined to persevere in his purpose, only from a supreme regard to the Saviour, whom he loved and served. As they all saw that he could not be persuaded, but had taken up the holy purpose of glorifying God, even by his death, should it be necessary, they ceased their importunities, and with deep submission to the will of God, declared, "The will of the Lord be done."

From Cesarea they proceeded to Jerusalem, by land, a distance of about sixty or seventy miles; and they were welcomed at the house of an old disciple of Cyprus, called Mnason. They were gladly received by the church at

Jerusalem; and thus finished the third missionary tour of Paul; in which, as before, through dangers, trials, and difficulties, he had been preserved. Paul's missionary report will be reserved for the following chapter.

Before concluding this chapter, however, it would be well to observe, that in the interval between the time when Paul left Ephesus, and his arrival at Jerusalem, he is supposed, by some of the best critics, to have written his first epistle to Timothy, his second epistle to the Corinthians, and his epistle to the Romans; so that his time was all occupied in his Master's cause—in writing for the confirmation of the churches in the truth, and in preaching Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

Paul gives his report to the church—Is induced to perform some ceremonial observances—Is seized in the temple—Rescued by Lysias, and addresses the Jews.

THE day after Paul arrived at Jerusalem, he made his missionary report. We are told

that he went in unto James, and that all the elders were present. This was, it would appear, an assembling of the church of Jerusalem, or at least the chief officers of the church; and to them Paul gave his interesting narrative of his success among the Gentiles. His foreign mission had been long and laborious, and dangerous, but he was amply repaid when he considered that the cause of his Master was advanced. This missionary report of Paul is not recorded, but we are at no loss for a knowledge of the principal events which it detailed, because we have the history in the previous chapters of the Acts. As might be expected, from men whose hearts were deeply engaged in the glorious cause of Christ, James and the elders of the church, were rejoiced, and glorified God, who had thus seen fit to crown the labours of Paul with so rich a blessing. In the midst of their congratulations, however, they took occasion to state to Paul, that many of the Christian converts from among the Jews were prejudiced against him, because he everywhere encouraged the Jewish converts to neglect and forsake the ceremonial observances of the law of Moses. This shows

how very difficult it is for persons to get over the prejudices of early education; and sometimes even the best Christians are so far influenced by their former views and habits of thinking, as very much to injure their usefulness. It was unquestionably right in Paul to discourage the Jewish converts from adhering to the mere ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law, because Christ had rendered those ceremonial observances unnecessary, when he became himself that sacrifice for sin, towards which all the institutions of the law had pointed. We think, therefore, that James and the elders of the church were over scrupulous, in wishing Paul to comply with some ceremonies, merely to satisfy unreasonable prejudices. But as we, of the present day, are not the competent judges of a matter, all the circumstances of which are not presented to our minds, we may be sure, that they acted for what they had reason to suppose the best interests of the church. In order, therefore, to silence objectors, they advised Paul to join himself with four persons who were bound by some particular vow to perform some religious ceremony. With this advice he com-

plied, not through a sinful or temporizing spirit, but that he might not wound any weak consciences; and, by conforming in matters merely indifferent, might gain the more to the love and service of Christ; such was his condescension and tender regard to the infirmities and mistakes of others.

It ought not to be concealed, that the disposition evinced in the Jewish converts, to cherish a prejudice against Paul, was unreasonable and sinful. They ought to have taken it for granted, that so eminent and laborious and self-denying a servant of Jesus Christ, could not do any thing to injure the cause of his Master. And we ought always to beware, for ourselves, lest we entertain or receive any unfavourable opinion of a brother, where there are no good grounds. This very prejudice of the Jewish converts was very near to have cost Paul his life, as we shall see.

All the ceremonial observances, connected with vows, and sacrifices, &c. had to be performed in the temple. While Paul was there, attending to this duty, some Jews from Asia saw him, and they at once made a great tumult, and seized him. Our readers proba-

bly know that there were certain parts of the temple into which it was unlawful for any but a Jew to enter. The Gentiles, or heathen, were not permitted to go beyond what was called the court of the Gentiles. These Jews of Asia had seen Paul in the city, in company with a heathen convert from Ephesus, named Trophimus, one of those who joined him at Troas, and they at once said, that he had brought him into the temple, supposing that he was one of the four with Paul. All this was false, but it answered the purpose of these wicked men; and on this ground there was a great commotion, and the people seized Paul, and drew him out of the temple, and closed the gates, and they were just about to kill him, when he was rescued by a Roman officer, called the captain of the temple. The Romans kept a band of soldiers and an officer, in a tower or fort, which was called the Tower of Antonia. This tower was higher than the courts of the temple; so that the guard could see what was going on below, and there was a stairs leading down from it to one of the porticos. When the captain then, found that there was a riot be-

low, he immediately went down with his soldiers, and took Paul out of the hands of the people, who were beating him. Paul was then bound with two chains; and the chief captain, Lysias, tried to find out what the matter was; but as the Jews were too much enraged to be able to make any reasonable accusation, he commanded him to be taken up into the tower. When they reached the stairs, Paul requested to speak to the chief captain, and Lysias asked him if he could speak Greek, for he supposed he was a certain Egyptian, who was the leader of a band of murderers; so much mistaken was the character of this man of God. Paul, however, undeceived him, and told him, that he was a Jew, a native of Tarsus, and asked his permission to address the people. He readily granted his request. Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned to the people who were below in the court of the temple, in order to obtain a hearing. When the commotion had subsided, and there was great silence, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, in the following speech:—

“Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And

when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him

that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee : and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart : for I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles."

When Paul had reached this part of his speech, the multitude interrupted him, for the idea, that God would be merciful to the Gentiles, was very offensive to their pride and prejudices. As soon, therefore, as he mentioned the word Gentiles, they began to shout, "away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." The anger of the people seemed to make them insane ; for they cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air. The chief captain then ordered Paul into the fort, and determined to have him scourged, in order to make him confess the reason why the people cried so much against him. . Here again, Paul found the benefit of pleading his rights as a Roman citizen. When they bound him, in order to be scourged, he asked the centurion, if it was lawful to scourge

a Roman citizen, and especially when he was not condemned for any fault. Paul knew that it was unlawful, and so did the centurion; and he went immediately to the chief captain, and said, you had better be careful about what you do, for this man is a Roman citizen. On hearing this, Lysias himself went down to Paul, and asked him if he was really a Roman citizen. Paul answered him, Yes. The tribune replied, that he had obtained the privilege of citizenship at a very great expense; as much as to say, that such a creature as he supposed Paul to be, never could have procured that rank. But, said Paul, I was born with this right. They left off then the cruel torture they were about to inflict, and loosed him. The tribune was very much alarmed at what he had done: he knew that he had been guilty of an unlawful act, in binding one who was a Roman citizen. So, by the providence of God, Paul that time escaped being scourged; which, in those days, was a most dreadfully cruel punishment.

CHAPTER XV.

Paul brought before the Sanhedrim—Dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees—Conspiracy against the life of Paul—Is sent to Cesarea.

IN the last chapter, we stated how, in the providence of God, Paul escaped being scourged. As Lysias could not, therefore, get his information by torturing Paul, he determined to assemble the Jewish Council, which was called the Great Sanhedrim. This he did the very next day; and when they had assembled, he took Paul under his own charge, and placed him before them, to be tried.

As soon as the assembly was in order, Paul began his defence, by saying,—“ Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.” Now, no one can see anything in these few words which ought to have given offence; yet, no sooner had he spoken them, than Ananias, who was

called the high priest, commanded those who stood by Paul to strike him on the mouth. Paul, however, was one of those men who knew his own rights, and did not choose to be trampled upon. He answered at once, to the high priest, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for dost thou sit to judge me according to the law, and yet dost thou command me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Those who were about, immediately said to Paul, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" And Paul immediately answered, I was not aware that it was the high priest, or I would not have spoken so severely; for it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

The question has been asked, and it has been made an objection by infidels to the truth of the whole relation, how could Paul be ignorant that it was the high priest to whom he spoke? There are a variety of answers given: some suppose that Paul was not acquainted with the person of the high priest, and some suppose that he had not his robes on. All these are unsatisfactory. There is one reason, which not only accounts for Paul's conduct,

but which more and more confirms the truth of the whole relation, because we have history to give us light. Ananias, in consequence of some disturbance between the Samaritans and the Jews, had a few years before been dispossessed of his office, and sent as a prisoner to Rome. He was soon afterwards released, however, and returned to Jerusalem. In the mean time, Jonathan had been made high priest; Jonathan was murdered by Felix; and between this and the time when Ismael was made high priest, there was a vacancy, when there was no regular high priest. Now it happened exactly at this time, that Paul was tried; and the sanhedrim, being destitute of a president, Ananias took it upon himself, as he was once high priest, to act in that capacity. He had no right to do so; and this Paul knew, and therefore Paul spoke with perfect correctness, and at the same time, with a severe censure upon Ananias, for his usurpation of authority, when he said, I was not aware that it was the high priest. It is worthy of very particular observation, that this passage, which has been used as an objection against the truth of the

relation, is one which, on the contrary, tends more fully to confirm it—so sure it is, that truth will prevail.

But to return to the history. Paul saw at once, from the disposition which was manifested in the council, that it was impossible for him to have a fair trial; and, therefore, he determined not to attempt to defend himself at this time, but opened a subject which would divide the assembly, and gain him some favour. The great sanhedrim was composed of those who belonged to the two rival sects among the Jews, called Pharisees and Sadducees; the latter of these, namely, the Sadducees, denied the doctrine of the resurrection and the existence of spirits. The Pharisees held both these doctrines. Instead, therefore, of going on with his defence, Paul cried out, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This was the real fact. It was his belief in Christ, which was founded on the doctrine of his resurrection, and on this, all the difficulty arose. This remark of Paul's was enough: the Pharisees belonging to the

council, said at once, that they found no evil in him. This led to a dispute between them and the Sadducees ; and, between them both, Paul came near being injured. The chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and to take him by force from among them, and to put him into the castle.

It is reasonable to suppose, that in the midst of all these trials and discouragements, and dangers, Paul needed more than ordinary consolation. The next night, the Lord Jesus appeared to him, and said to him, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so thou must bear witness of me also at Rome." This, at least, assured Paul that he should at that time escape the malice of the Jews.

Bigotry and revenge are never satisfied but with the ruin or destruction of the object against which they are levelled. As Paul had not been condemned by the council, and as he was under the guard of the Roman soldiers, his enemies found that they could not openly, and under the pretence of law, take

away his life. But what they could not do in one way, they purposed to accomplish in another. As early as day-light the next day, about forty of the Jews met together privately, and bound themselves by a curse, that they would not eat until they had killed Paul. This most wicked conspiracy against his life was very artfully planned, and the men obtained the sanction of the chief priests and elders. The plan which they proposed, was this: they advised, that the next day the council should request the chief captain to bring Paul once more before them for examination; and their object was to fall upon him and kill him suddenly, between the stairs which led down from the castle and the room in which the council was to be assembled. This wicked design, God saw fit to disappoint; for by his providence, it so happened that their plans were overheard by the son of Paul's sister. This young man went immediately into the castle, and informed Paul, who requested one of the centurions to take him to the chief captain. There he was examined privately, and Lysias putting full credit in his story, dismissed him, with a caution to say

nothing about it. As soon as the young man had gone, Lysias ordered two centurions to get ready a guard of two hundred soldiers, and two hundred spearmen, and seventy horsemen, and to be ready at nine o'clock that night. Thus God made this captain careful to preserve the life of Paul, by sending him to Cesarea under so strong a guard, that it was impossible for him to be molested. In order to explain the matter, Lysias wrote the following letter to Felix, the governor, and sent it with the party who went as a guard:—
“Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also,

to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell." At the time appointed, viz. nine o'clock at night, the soldiers took Paul, as they had been commanded, and under this strong guard, they travelled all night; and before they stopped, reached a place called Antipatris, about forty-two miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cesarea. From this place, the soldiers were sent back, and Paul travelled the rest of the distance under the guard of the horsemen only; for they knew that it would be impossible for the Jews to follow them quick enough to do any mischief. When the party reached Cesarea, Paul was immediately delivered up to the governor Felix, and he was kept in custody, in a place called Herod's judgment-hall. Felix summoned the accusers of Paul to come down to Cesarea, where he would try the cause himself. How wonderful does the providence of God appear, in thus, time after time, rescuing Paul out of the hands of his persecutors. The trial and defence of Paul will form the interesting subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

Paul's Defence before Felix.

FIVE days after the summons, Ananias and the elders, with a lawyer whom they had employed, named Tertullus, and who appears to have been distinguished for his ingenuity and eloquence, came down to Cesarea, and opened the cause against Paul in a way which was calculated at once to prejudice the Governor in his own favour, and against Paul. No honest man, however, could have taken the course which Tertullus did, for he told the most abominable falsehoods, just to flatter the vanity of Felix. Felix was notorious for his wickedness, and his bad administration of the government; besides this, he had, a little while before, murdered the high priest Jonathan; and yet Tertullus could be so vile, as to flatter him about the *very worthy* deeds which he had done in favour of the nation, and thank him for his goodness. As Tertullus had said so many flattering things to the Governor, he did not

seem to think it necessary to bring any *proof* against Paul. All he did, was merely to accuse him of being a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition; a ring leader of the Nazarenes, as the Christians were contemptuously called. He also accused him of profaning the temple, and said that they would have judged Paul according to their law, but that Lysias violently took him out of their hands. The Jews, who came with Tertullus, agreed with him in these accusations.

Paul saw at once, that they had brought no proof against him, for there was none to bring, and when the Governor beckoned to Paul to commence his defence, he very politely began by expressing his willingness to be tried by Felix, because he had been in office several years, and of course was presumed to be acquainted with Jewish laws and customs. He says :—"Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man,

neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Now, after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult: who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried, standing among them—touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.” The boldness, and the dignity, and the honesty of Paul, seem to have confounded his accusers,

and excited the admiration of Felix. Tertullus and the Jews did not pretend to say anything further, and Felix postponed the trial till he should see Lysias. Paul appears to have been treated kindly. He was put under the care of a centurion, as a kind of prisoner at large, and his friends were allowed to visit him, and to supply his wants.

Felix appears to have been somewhat interested in Paul; and as the Apostle was at the time the great and distinguished champion of the Christian faith, the Governor and his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, sent for him to tell them something about Christianity. It will be necessary to remark, that Felix had enticed Drusilla from her husband Azizus, king of Emessa; and she had married him while her former husband was living. What the motive of these two was, in hearing Paul, it is impossible to say. Most probably it was mere curiosity. This feeling, however, Paul did by no means feel at liberty to gratify. He aimed, not to amuse them, but to fix the arrows of conviction in their consciences. He seems to have discussed the doctrinal part of the subject fully, and then to take hold of the

practical application of the doctrines of the Christian faith. Regardless of the event as to himself, he addressed them with peculiar solemnity, on the topics which seemed most likely to awaken in them a sense of guilt, and to alarm their fears. He "reasoned of righteousness," before the man who had practised extreme injustice and oppression; of "temperance," before those who were living in a state of licentiousness; "and of judgment to come," that they might be alarmed for the consequences of their wickedness. Some may be astonished at the boldness of the Apostle, who, instead of desiring to excuse himself, and gain the favour of his dignified hearers, endeavours to bring them to repentance. But this is a spirit, which ought to characterize every minister of the Gospel. Without any fear of consequences to themselves, they should declare to the most distinguished of their people, the guilt and danger of their situation if impenitent; and, instead of using flattering speeches, warn them "to flee from the wrath to come." It often occurs in the providence of God, that fidelity such as this is amply rewarded, and the careless and abandoned sinner forced to

feel the power of the truth in awakening the conscience. It was so in the present instance. The haughty judge trembled under the exhibition of Divine truth made by the prisoner before him. His heart was evidently wounded by the arrow of conviction, and he could not conceal the horror of his feelings: he "trembled" at the anticipation of the judgment to come. But he loved his sins, and this love was stronger than his convictions, so that he hastened to bring the painful interview with Paul to a conclusion; but still, like a person irresolute even in sin, he did not seem to wish to abandon all idea of religion. He did what ten thousand are daily doing—sought to make his conscience easy, by pleading his numerous engagements at that time, and promising a serious attention to the things of eternity at "a more convenient season."

This convenient season never came. Instead of this, Felix appears to have been hardened in his sins, a very usual result of religious convictions stifled before they lead to conversion. We know that this was the case with Felix, because his conduct towards Paul was more iniquitous than ever. He knew

that Paul was innocent, and yet he did not release him. He had frequent conversations with him, but the sacred historian tells us, that his object was that Paul should bribe him with money, in order to obtain his liberty. The Lord Jesus had furnished his Apostle with arguments which could make the sinner tremble, but he had not furnished him with money to buy his favour, and so Felix kept Paul a prisoner for no less than two years; and when he was removed, to make room for Porcius Festus, who was appointed in his place, he continued Paul in prison, just to please the Jews.

Let the reader be willing to pause one moment, to ask himself the question, whether he has never stifled the convictions which may have been produced in his mind, by the faithful declaration of the word of God? Like Felix, perhaps, you may be inclined to dismiss the preacher, and turn away from those offensive subjects, by which your consciences are alarmed. Are you resolved then, to cast off all thoughts of God and eternal things? No, you hope that at some future opportunity you shall be more at liberty to attend to your

spiritual concerns. What means this putting off? Is not your short life hastening to a close? Is not judgment approaching? May you not soon be called before the tribunal of heaven? Or, may you not, by your unwillingness to submit, provoke God to leave you to your own devices, and say, in righteous indignation, "let him alone?" To what other season are you looking forward, or what can be so convenient as the present? "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation."

CHAPTER XVII.

The celebrated speech of Paul, before Festus and Agrippa.

ABOUT the year 60, Porcius Festus succeeded Felix in the government of Judea, and when he came to Cesarea found Paul there a prisoner. After he had remained three days, he set off for Jerusalem. When he first reached that city, some of the principal Jews solicited him to condemn Paul, or at least to

order him from Cesarea to Jerusalem. Their hope was to get some opportunity of murdering him by the way. This design was again frustrated by God, for Festus would not consent to it, but told his accusers that they must go down to Cesarea. After remaining in Jerusalem a little over ten days, Felix returned to Cesarea; and the next day commanded Paul to be brought into the court. The Jews from Jerusalem appeared as his accusers, but they could prove nothing against him. Festus however, desirous of pleasing the Jews, asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried. This showed that Festus disregarded all justice, and was willing to deliver Paul to the malice of his foes. It was on this occasion that the Apostle made the following brief, yet most judicious answer: "I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat," that is, I stand for trial before a *Roman* tribunal, "where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there is no truth in any of these things whereof these accuse me, no man has a right to deliver me to them. I

appeal to Cesar." This was the last resort of a Roman citizen. It was his privilege to be tried before the emperor himself, and such an appeal stopped all proceedings in any of the lower courts. The appeal of Paul to the emperor was not the effect of cowardice—his whole history shows that he was above fear. It was because he knew that he could get no justice done him in any of the inferior tribunals. It is the duty of a Christian to assert his civil rights, and always to demand the protection which the laws of his country allow him. In his perilous situation, Paul took the only course which his duty or safety could dictate; and it was therefore determined that he should go to Rome to be tried. Thus the desire of the Apostle to visit that city was brought about, though in a very different way probably from what he expected.

Not long after these occurrences, Festus received a visit from Agrippa and his sister Bernice. The purpose of this visit appears to have been to congratulate Festus on his being made governor of Judea. At this time, Agrippa had the provinces of Gaulonitis, Trachonites, Batanea, Paneas, and Abilene

under his government, with the title of King. He had afterwards Julias, in Perea, and a part of Galilee, on the west of the sea of Tiberias. These were added to his government by the emperor Nero. During the visit which Agrippa and his sister made to Festus, in the course of conversation the subject of Paul's imprisonment was mentioned. Festus gave the following account of the matter, in which he, no doubt, pretends to a careless ignorance of the doctrines held by the Apostle. He thus states the case to Agrippa:—"There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth; against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation

of such things as I supposed : but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar." This excited the curiosity of Agrippa, and he said that he would like to hear Paul. In order to gratify his company, Festus the next day assembled his court, and with great pomp they came together to hear the Apostle make an address. Festus knew that he had no right to try Paul, as he had appealed to the emperor ; and that he was not compelled to answer. To excuse himself, however, he stated to the assembly, that he wanted to hear what Paul had to say for himself ; so that when he sent him to the emperor, he might have something to write about ; for, says he, " it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him." And so it was ; there was neither reason nor justice

in keeping Paul a prisoner. The only reasonable, and the only just course, was to have released him, as he confesses that he did not know what crimes were laid to his charge. But God had purposes of infinite importance to answer; and so these wicked men were left to act their own pleasure against the Apostle. In the mean time, let it be remembered, that on this occasion Paul was not tried. He was brought before this assembly merely to give an account of himself, and this he did not only voluntarily, but cheerfully. Conscious innocence always makes a man willing to speak boldly. The address of Paul is one of the most dignified, eloquent, and fearless orations ever delivered. He was glad to get an opportunity of speaking before Agrippa, because he, being a Jew, could readily understand all those nice peculiarities of his case which were not familiar to the Romans. The speech of Paul was as follows:—"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the

Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus, with authority and

commission from the chief priests: at mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout

all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come : that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Festus appears, in this place, rather rudely to have interrupted Paul. He probably considered the speech of the Apostle as absurd and enthusiastic ; and though he was willing to allow him the credit of being a learned man, he supposed him deranged. He exclaimed, "Paul thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad."

The same objection has been repeatedly urged against all those who zealously contend for the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the Christian system. Careless persons, who take no pains to examine the subject, treat these sublime and heavenly truths as perfectly

unintelligible. In vindication of themselves, for their rejection of the Gospel, they endeavour to cast an odium upon its advocates; and represent them, however sincere they may be, as men who are of weak minds, and easily led away.

Paul replied to the charge of Festus, with great energy, and yet with the most becoming respect,—“I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;” and, to prove that he was speaking nothing but the sober truth, he turned round to king Agrippa, and appealed to him, if he did not know these things to be true. “I am persuaded,” says Paul, “that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner:” that is, the miracles of Christ, and all the facts of his life, were perfectly notorious at the time, as the scene of the transactions had not been some obscure place, but the whole land of Judea; and as the facts of the history of Christ, strictly agreed with the predictions of the prophets, the Apostle felt himself authorised to argue as he had done. It seems that the Apostle must have perceived that some impression was made upon the mind of Agrippa; for, as soon

as he had declared that the facts of the history of Christ were matters of public notoriety, he asks the interesting question, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" And then, without waiting for his answer, he goes on, "I know that thou believest." The truth found its way to the heart of Agrippa; and, in the first impulse of his feelings, he replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a CHRISTIAN." Unhappy man, that he did not yield an entire submission to the truth of the Gospel! The fear of the world, most probably, prevented his conversion. With a persuasion that what Paul had preached was true, his heart shrunk from the sacrifices which it would require to be a Christian, and he went back into his former state of enmity. The acknowledgment made by Agrippa, though favourable, was by no means satisfactory to the anxious mind of Paul: he knew that such partial convictions could never secure the salvation of the soul. Forgetting his own case, and anxious only for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, with the most tender affection he replies,—
"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost,

and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." This devout aspiration clearly manifested his unbounded benevolence, his full confidence in the goodness of the Lord, and the blessedness which he experienced in the midst of his sufferings. He was not ashamed of being the prisoner of the Lord; he envied not the king and governor their pomp and power, and he could not express his good wishes for them in other terms than desiring that, like him, they might belong to Jesus Christ. How great and noble does the Christian here appear! The little distinctions of crowns and chains, robes of state, and prison garments sink into nothing, in view of eternity and the great concerns of the immortal soul.

The last remark of Paul closed the assembly. The King, and Bernice, and Festus rose up with the counsellors; and when they had conferred among themselves, they were fully persuaded that he was innocent; and they agreed that they would have dismissed him, if he had not referred the cause to the Roman emperor.

And now, upon a serious review of the his-

tory thus far, we would inquire of our readers, not what is your opinion of Paul, but what think you of your own character, and what think you of the Saviour whom Paul so zealously and fearlessly preached? Have you seriously attended to the doctrines which he maintained? Have they made any impression upon your minds? Perhaps, like Festus, you may be disposed to treat them with contempt; or probably, like Agrippa, you are disposed to resist or trifle with their impressions. You are "almost persuaded," and here you rest. Ought this to satisfy your consciences, or can you seriously expect in such a case to inherit the promises of God? O, why will you not consent to advance a little further, and be "altogether" what your own conscience tells you you ought to be? There are hundreds and thousands of men, who have sound understandings and solid judgments, who can tell you of the blessedness which they have found in the service of Christ. They argue rightly, that it is not a vain illusion of the fancy, but a most delightful reality, by which they are supported and comforted in the most severe and pressing difficulties. With tender af-

fection, and compassionate importunity, they press it upon you to make the trial, that you may partake of their felicity. Credit their testimony, and do not reject your own mercies. Stop not at that awful point with all the responsibility of a sense of duty on your soul, and heaven within your reach. May HE, who alone can subdue the human heart to himself, lead you to embrace the Gospel. May the almighty influence of his grace enable you to break through all your difficulties, and make you not "almost," but "altogether" a Christian.

CHAPTER XVIII.

*Voyage of Paul to Rome, as a prisoner—
Suffers shipwreck.*

It was the will of God, that Paul should bear his testimony as an apostle of Jesus Christ at Rome; but how that object was to be accomplished was unknown to the Apostle. Though this was distinctly the determination of God, it was, in the method of his providential

dealing, brought about by means the most perfectly natural. Paul's appeal to the Roman emperor, was the last link in the chain of second causes by which this was to be accomplished.

After the noble defence of himself and doctrines which the Apostle made before Festus and others, it was determined, that in consequence of his appeal he must be sent to Rome. And as there were other prisoners whose cases required the decision of the emperor himself, they were all put under the charge of Julius, a centurion, who had command of a company belonging to that Roman cohort, which was dignified with the title of Augustan. There is here a striking coincidence, which is one of those incidental circumstances so fully proving the truth of the Scripture history. Josephus observes, in his account of the Jewish wars, that when Felix was procurator of Judea, the Roman garrison at Cesarea was principally composed of soldiers who were *natives of Syria*; but he also observes, that a small body of *Roman* soldiers was stationed there at the same time, and that this body was dignified with the title of *Sebaste*, which means Augustan, and

the same word is used both by Luke, who wrote the Acts, and by Josephus. This title was known of course to Luke, who accompanied Paul from Cesarea to Rome; now that, in the time of the emperor Nero, the garrison of Cesarea, which consisted chiefly of Syrian soldiers, contained also a body of Roman soldiers, and that they were known by the title of Augustan, are circumstances so minute, that they prove the history to have been written only by one in the situation of St. Luke.

In this voyage, the only friends which Paul appears to have had with him, were Luke, and a man of Macedonia named Aristarchus. We have very little account of this Aristarchus; he is mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Colossians as his "fellow prisoner," and in his epistle to Philemon as his "fellow labourer;" but there are no further records concerning him.

At Cesarea, the centurion took passage for himself and the guard, and the prisoners, in a ship of Adramyttium, which was not however going directly to Rome. There was probably no vessel in the port at that time bound to Rome, as there was very little commercial in-

tercourse between the two places. The vessel touched at Sidon, a port of Phenicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean, a very short distance from Cesarea; and there the centurion treated Paul with great respect and kindness. He was permitted to visit his friends, and only required to hold himself in readiness to sail when the vessel was prepared. The course from Sidon to Myra, in Lycia, is very direct, as will be seen by inspecting the maps; but, in consequence of contrary winds, they were compelled to sail round the north-east side of the island of Cyprus. This, of course, required them to coast along the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia. At Myra, the centurion found a vessel of Alexandria, bound to Italy. These vessels were employed a great deal in carrying wheat from Alexandria to Rome. In this ship, therefore, the centurion took passage; and as she was heavily laden, and had the wind ahead, they made little progress for many days. When they had coasted along as far as opposite to Cnidus, which was a promontory of Asia, at one corner of the peninsula of Caria, the wind was too much ahead to suffer them to cross directly over the mouth

of the Egean sea, of Archipelago, so that they sailed directly over towards the island of Crete, and doubling the south-eastern cape, called then Salmone, and now Cape Solomon, came to anchor in a port called the Fair Havens, near which there was a city of Crete, named Lasea. In this port they spent considerable time, probably on account of head winds; and staid so long, that Paul advised them to remain, as it was that season of the year when sailing had become dangerous. The time of the year we learn, from the circumstance that Luke tells us, "the *fast* was already over." Now, the *fast* is generally allowed to mean that fast of *the great day of atonement*; which was always celebrated on the 10th day of the Jewish 7th month, and which answers to the latter part of our September. As this was about the time of the autumnal equinox, it was particularly dangerous to sail in the Mediterranean sea, so much so, that its danger was proverbial. In consequence of this, Paul advised them to remain where they were, and spend the winter; for he was sure the voyage would result in some disaster, if they persisted in sailing in a heavily

loaded vessel at that season. The centurion, however, submitted to the opinion of the pilot, and the owner of the ship; and as the port of the Fair Havens was not commodious, they determined, at any rate, to try and reach the port of Phenice, on the same island; but which lay more to the south-west, and was, probably, a better port. At this time, a light south wind came on, which seemed so favourable, that they set sail, keeping close along the southern shore of Crete. It was not long, however, before the words of Paul became true. They had sailed only a little while, when the wind changed and blew a tempest. This wind, the historian calls Euroclydon, and is generally supposed to have been that tempestuous and uncertain wind which blows in all directions, and is called a Levanter. This wind appears to have varied, however, but little from the east point; for, as the ship could not "bear up into the wind," that is, luff up against it, they were compelled to let her "drive," that is, go before the wind. In doing this, they had hard work to weather the island of Clauda; and it was, therefore, impossible for them to reach the port of Phe-

nice. While in this situation, they were in danger of striking on the shoals between Clauda and Crete; but they struck sail, and were driven under what seamen now call bare polls, so furious was the tempest. The next day, the sea being very heavy, and the vessel in danger of being buried under them, they lightened the ship by throwing some of the heaviest part of the cargo overboard; and the third day, the disciples joined in the labour of lightening the vessel, casting overboard, with their own hands, the heavy tackling; and then, when several days passed, and neither sun or moon, or stars, to be seen, and they, all the while, driving before the storm, they gave up all hope of being saved, as they were sure they must be approaching some land. "But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me, this night, the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying,

Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought before Cesar : and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island."

After they had been driven in this way for two weeks, up and down in that part of the Mediterranean sea called Adria, on the fourteenth night, about midnight, the seamen supposed themselves to be near land, and they sounded, that is tried the depth of the water, with a heavy lead used for that purpose, and found it 20 fathoms ; then immediately 15 ; so that they feared they would be cast on shore or rocks. Under these circumstances, they let go four anchors out of the stern of the ship, or, as it has been ingeniously explained, the anchor with four flocks, and anxiously wished for the day. The sailors thought their only way was to take to the boat ; but as there were on board the vessel many times more than the boat could hold, they tried to deceive the passengers, and thus escape themselves. Under the plea of casting anchor ahead of the ship, they lowered the boat, and were going to get

into it; but Paul was aware of their design, and said to the centurion, "except these" men, that is the sailors, "abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;" that is, there is no way of preventing a complete wreck; because there are none but sailors who understand the management of a vessel in such a situation. The soldiers took a very short way of preventing this conduct of the sailors; they cut the ropes which fastened the boat to the side, and let her go, so that there was now no means of their deserting the vessel. At day-light, Paul exhorted them to be confident—to eat something, as they had fasted so long. He did this himself, giving thanks to God, and his cheerfulness and calmness seems to have inspired them all with fresh courage: he assured them from God, that none should be lost, though there was no less than 276 persons on board. When they had eaten, they fell to work and lightened the ship, by throwing the wheat into the sea; and when it was broad day-light, they discovered the land, and seeing something like a creek, they thought they might run the ship on shore safely. Under this impression they took in their anchors, and loosened the

rudder bands,* and hoisted a sail,† and made towards the shore. The vessel appears to have been caught in an eddy, and grounded on some sand-bank near the shore, where the bows stuck fast, while the stern was in deeper water ; so that, by the force of the waves, she was broken into pieces.

Under these circumstances, which would seem naturally to have softened the heart, the soldiers appear to have been actuated by the most cruel feelings. They supposed, that as the vessel was now a wreck, some of the prisoners might make their escape by swimming, and suggested the idea of putting them to death. Nothing seems to have saved the lives of the prisoners on this occasion, but the attachment of the centurion to Paul ; he wished to save him, and for his sake spared the rest, which is

* Large vessels in ancient times had two or more rudders, one at the stern, another at the side, and sometimes one at the bows. The bands were fastenings by which the rudders were hoisted out of the water during a storm, and lashed, as they could not all be used. In fair weather they let them down again. They appear to have done this on the present occasion, that they might have every opportunity of steering.

† The text says *main sail*, but the Greek word more properly means what we call the jib, or triangular sail from the bowsprit to the foremast.

another instance of the truth of what God had said, that he would give to Paul the lives of those who were with him. The centurion gave orders, that all who could swim should throw themselves into the sea ; and that those who could not swim, should get what they could to help them. Thus, some on boards, and others on broken parts of the ship, all succeeded in getting safe to land ; not one life was lost ; an instance of the special interference of God, for the fulfilment of his promises : for nothing less than a miraculous agency could have saved the lives of two hundred and seventy-six persons under the circumstances of such a shipwreck.

It is impossible but that every serious reader of the Scriptures should perceive in this relation the hand of God, overruling these various circumstances for the protection of his faithful servant, and with a view to the propagation of the Gospel. Among other purposes for which this history is written in the Scriptures, it would seem, as if it is meant to encourage the persuasion, that all events shall be made subservient to the deliverance of God's people ; although he may, as the trial of their faith and

patience, cause them to pass through much anxiety and tribulation. Let him who has a good hope through grace, that he is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, be encouraged in the expectation of a happy issue to all his trials. Many and formidable dangers may seem to obstruct his path, but he shall surely reach the inheritance which is promised. He may escape with difficulty, like the shipwrecked company with Paul, "some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship," yet like them, trust in the Lord, and he will be brought out safely at last. It will be his happiness to experience the comfort beautifully expressed in the following lines:—

"Let cares like a wild deluge come,
Let storms of sorrow fall,
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my Heaven, my all:—

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

CHAPTER XIX.

Paul on the Island of Melita, and his voyage to Rome.

OUR last chapter contained an account of the dreadful shipwreck of Paul and his companions. By the merciful providence of God, the whole company reached the land in safety; and they at once ascertained that the island on which they were wrecked was called Melita. It is not a matter of any great consequence, but still may be interesting to our readers to ascertain where this island was, and by what name it is at present called. On this subject, there is some difference of opinion among the learned; for there are two islands which originally bore this name. One of them is in what is called the Gulf of Venice; and may be found on the map, situated near the coast of Illyricum, and nearly opposite to Epidaurus: its name on the map is Meleta. It would be useful for our readers to take the map, and, setting out from the Island of

Crete, see whether it is very probable that the vessel was driven so far northward as the Gulf of Venice; we think not. The other island of this name is in the Mediterranean sea, between the Island of Sicily and the coast of Africa, and is now called Malta. This island is about twenty miles long, twelve miles in its greatest breadth, and about sixty miles in circumference. Tradition universally considers this place as the island on which Paul was wrecked; and any one who will inspect the maps, will find no difficulty in believing this opinion to be by far the most probable.

At the time of the shipwreck, which occurred about 1770 years ago, the island was inhabited, most probably, by the descendants of the Phenicians, who were the great discoverers and adventurers of those times. The history calls them "barbarous people;" but we are not to understand by this term, exactly the same as we now mean when we use the word barbarian. With the Greeks and Romans, and others, it was customary to call those persons *barbarians* whose language they did not understand. Herodotus tells us, that the Egyptians did so; and Ovid, a Roman au-

thor of very great celebrity, when among the Getae, says, "Here I am a *barbarian*, for no one understands me." We have the same method of speaking used by Paul himself, in the 14th chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, "If I know not the meaning of the voice;" that is, if I do not understand the language, "I shall be unto him that speaketh, a *barbarian*; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." By "barbarous people," then, we are not to understand that they were cruel or savage, beyond any other heathen people, but that they were a people whose language was not understood by the more civilized nations. That they were not *barbarians*, in the ordinary sense of the word is perfectly obvious; for the historian goes on to say, that after the shipwreck, when they were wet and weary, and almost lifeless, these very people "showed us no little kindness." Instead of using them cruelly, as it was rainy and cold, they made a fire on the beach, and tried to accommodate the whole company as well as they possibly could. Paul himself was not idle: he gathered a bundle of sticks to lay on the fire.

Among these sticks a viper had previously crawled, probably benumbed ; as all kinds of snakes are very easily benumbed by cold. When the fire began to burn, however, the viper was roused ; and, as Paul had his hands close to the fire, probably handling the wood, the viper fastened itself upon him. This the superstitious people thought was an indication of his wickedness ; and they at once said among themselves,—“ No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.” Knowing that he was a prisoner, they concluded that he must be one of the vilest kind, on whom God, in his justice, would inflict that punishment which he was likely not to receive from the hands of men. God does, indeed, often visit the guilty sinner with sudden vengeance, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and as we often see now in sabbath-breakers and profane swearers : and men should tremble at the thought, that God may cut them off in their sin, and bring them to judgment. It is certain that these people, although they were heathen, and called barbarous, believed that God exercises a rule

over the affairs of men; that he sees and knows all that is done, and that he will punish the guilty, although they may escape the hands of man. They soon found themselves mistaken in their judgment of Paul. The viper did not, probably, bite him; or, if it did, God prevented the poison from hurting him: and Paul, just as if nothing had happened, shook off the viper into the fire, without any harm. The people looked at him a little while; for they supposed that he would have swollen, or dropped down dead: but when they saw that nothing happened, they changed to the very opposite extreme, and then foolishly supposed that he was a god.

On that part of the island was the residence of the *chief* man, most probably the governor: and, by using this title, Luke shows his remarkable accuracy; for the governor, instead of being called by the usual title, was called, "*Chief* of the Melitese." There was an ancient inscription found at Malta, the literal translation of which is as follows,—“Lucius Caius, son of Quirinus, a Roman knight, *Chief* of the Melitese.” This

is one among those incidental notices proving the truth and accuracy of the history.

Publius, who at this time was what we would call governbr of Malta, took the whole party of Christians to his own house, lodged them three days, and paid them every attention which their circumstances required. It so happened, that the father of Publius was very ill with a fever and dysentery; and Paul, having prayed with him, laid his hands on him, and he was cured. This miracle was soon noised abroad through the island, and many others who had diseases, came and were healed.

As Paul and his companions, in consequence of their disastrous shipwreck, had lost all their little property, and were entirely destitute, the people of the island very generously supplied them with all necessary things; and, at the end of three months, when they were about to set sail again for Rome, by the first convenient opportunity which offered, they gave them every comfort which was required for their voyage.

A ship from Alexandria, carrying corn to

Rome, had wintered at Malta; by which we suppose is meant, had there spent the most tempestuous months, for as Paul was shipwrecked most probably in October, the three months would be up at least by the beginning of February. This, though in the winter, was a very good time for sailing in those seas, because the wind was then generally steady, and the passage accounted safe.

It was the custom of the ancient Greeks and Romans, to place the image or picture of the Deity to whose care and protection they committed the ship, at the stern, and to place the sign by the name of which the ship was called, at the head. The practice of modern days is somewhat similar, though we are happily relieved from the terrors and superstitions of paganism. We, generally, put some image at the bows of our ships, merely as one method of distinguishing the vessel from others, and we paint the name on the stern. Various flags also are contrived, that a vessel may be told at a distance. The sign of the ship in which Paul sailed from Malta, was Castor and Pollux, two heathen deities that we care nothing about.

Now let us start again and follow the course of the vessel. From Malta, the captain struck over to a port on the east side of the island of Sicily, called Syracuse, where he staid three days. This place was so famous, that we feel disposed to tell our readers a little about it.

Syracuse is one of the most famous cities of antiquity. It is the capital of the island of Sicily; and was built about 730 years before the Christian Era. The city originally was about twenty-two miles in circumference, and was celebrated by the warlike spirit of its inhabitants. It is most remarkable as the birth-place of *Archimedes*, a man distinguished for his great skill in the science of mathematics, who, when the city was besieged by the Romans under Marcellus, about 212 years before Christ, defended the place with the powerful engines which he invented and put into use, against all the valour and power of the Romans. He beat their gallies to pieces with large stones thrown from his machines, and by hooks, chains, and levers from the walls, sunk and destroyed their ships. Some, he is said to have set on fire by powerful

burning glasses. The city was at last taken by treachery ; and so intent was Archimedes upon his studies, that the first he knew of it was by a soldier with a dagger at his throat. —“ Stop, soldier,” said he, “ or you will spoil my diagram.” The brutal soldier, however, knew and cared little about diagrams, and so killed him on the spot.

Syracuse was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake, in the year 1693. Its present population is 18,000, and Christianity, in some form or other, has existed there ever since Paul spent the three days mentioned in the history.

From Syracuse, they coasted along the eastern side of Sicily, and went over to Rhegium, which was a city, or promontory of the same name, and the most southern boundary of Italy. From hence, they took advantage of a south wind, which was fair, and sailed to Puteoli, a sea port about sixty miles south and east of Rome. Here they found Christian brethren ; and the centurion who had Paul in charge, probably determined to take the direct road to Rome, and go no farther by water. At Puteoli, among the brethren, they

were permitted to stay seven days, and then they went towards Rome.

ROME was one of the most celebrated cities in the universe, the capital of Italy, and once the capital of the *whole world*. It is situated on the river Tiber, a small river which flows into the Mediterranean sea. It was founded by Romulus, 753 years before the Christian era. But a history of Rome cannot here be given. Our readers must seek for that in works expressly written for the object.

As Paul was permitted to stay seven days in Puteoli, the Christians in Rome had time to hear of his arrival, and some of them came to meet him as far as a place called Appii Forum, or the market place of Appius. This was a town on a road from Rome to Campania, called the Appian way. This road was remarkable in those days, because it was paved, and was a work of great labour, such as became the great empire in which it was built. Appii Forum was fifty-two miles from Rome. As Paul went on, he found more brethren at a place called the Three Taverns, on the same road, about thirty-three miles from Rome.

The visit of the brethren cheered the mind of Paul; and we are told that he "thanked God, and took courage."

At length they came to Rome, and the centurion delivered up his prisoners to the captain of the guard. What became of the other prisoners we are not told; but as to Paul, he was very much favoured in being permitted to dwell by himself under the guard of a soldier. This mode of custody, however, was by no means pleasant; though it was better than being put into the common prison. As our readers may not understand why it was uncomfortable, we will explain it. Paul was bound to this soldier by a chain, and, of course, he could never be absent from the soldier. All his communications, therefore, either with the Jews, or his Christian brethren, had to be in the presence of this witness. He alludes to it, in the conversation which he had with the Jews—"for the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain." Blessed be God, however, he was free to speak and to write; and the result of this freedom we shall notice in another chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

Paul, during his imprisonment at Rome.

PAUL appears to have taken about three days to get rested from the fatigues of his journey, and to devote to his immediate friends; after which he sent for the Jews to meet him. When they came together, he told them the whole of the circumstances which caused his imprisonment, and induced him to appeal to the Emperor. To his utter amazement, he found that the Jews in Rome knew nothing about the matter; and they told him, that they had neither received any letters from Jerusalem on the subject, neither had any of their brethren from Judea said any evil about him. This shows that the Jews in Judea, though they persecuted him so violently there, felt their cause entirely frustrated by his appeal to the Emperor, and so let the matter drop. Paul in Rome, therefore, had no accusers, and though kept a prisoner, had no specific charge laid against him. In consequence of this state of

things, the Jews told him, that all the object they had in coming to visit him, was, that they might hear his opinion on the subject of Christianity; for they confessed that they were entirely ignorant on the subject, and that the whole amount of their knowledge was, that the *Christians* were a *sect, every where spoken against.*

Paul of course was very anxious to express his full and decided opinion on the subject of the Christian religion; and on a certain day, which they themselves appointed, they came to his lodging for this purpose. Here he set himself more earnestly to work to convince them of the truth of the religion of his master. We are told, that "he expounded and testified the kingdom of God;" that is, he showed the reign of the Messiah to mean a spiritual reign, and that Jesus, whom he preached, was the true Messiah. The arguments which he brought on these points he gathered entirely from the scriptures, from the law, and the prophets; and so full are the testimonies connected with all the types and ceremonies and institutions of the law, and the numerous predictions of the prophets, that he was from

morning until evening engaged in this interesting and important discussion.

This conversation was not without its profitable effect : "some believed;" but as is usual in the faithful exhibition of truth, "some believed not." There are always those who reject the counsel of God. The discussion of Paul seems to have had the effect of exciting a spirit of investigation among them, but they could come to no agreement; so that before the Jews left him, he felt constrained to tell them, that their conduct verified the prophecy of Isaiah—"Go unto this people and say, hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted, and I should heal them." And then he concluded his address, by telling them, what he had told the Jews in other places twice before, viz. that the salvation of the gospel being rejected by them, would be offered to the Gentiles; and that they would hear it, accept it, obey it, and be saved.

This is the last recorded address of Paul to his dear brethren after the flesh ; that is, the Jews. It was an address which must have been accompanied with a blessing, for we are told that the Jews had great reasonings among themselves ; and wherever there is a spirit of inquiry, no matter what temporary inconveniences may be experienced by the circumstance of controversy, truth must and will finally prevail to the praise and glory of God.

The history tells us, that Paul remained two whole years in his own hired house. How was he employed ? Let it be remembered, all the while, that he was a prisoner, though allowed to occupy his own apartments. How was he employed ? His time was continually occupied in two great departments of his master's business—writing and preaching. During his two years imprisonment, he wrote the following epistles, or letters, in the order in which they will be named.

1. The Epistle to the Ephesians, to establish them in the Christian faith, by describing in the most animating language, the mercy of God in the calling of the Gentiles, through faith in Jesus Christ ; and to enforce upon

them that holiness and consistency of conduct which is required of all who receive a knowledge of the gospel salvation. This epistle he sent by Tychicus, who carried it to Ephesus, for the purpose of giving the Christians there personal assurances of Paul's welfare and affection for them.

2. Next he wrote an epistle to the Philippians, to comfort them under the concern they expressed on the subject of his imprisonment, and to exhort them to continue in union and mutual love. Also, to caution them against the seductions of false teachers, who had begun to introduce themselves among them.

3. He next wrote an epistle to the Colossians, in answer to a message which they had sent by Epaphras. His object in this epistle was principally to prove, that the hope of man's salvation is founded exclusively on the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ; also to set them right in relation to some Jewish and heathen opinions which were industriously propagated. This epistle also appears to have been sent by Tychicus.

4. The next epistle which he wrote was to his friend Philemon, who lived in Colosse.

This epistle was to intercede for a slave named Onesimus, who had run away from his master to Rome, where he was converted, and sent back by Paul.

But besides this, Paul was engaged in preaching during the two years of his confinement. This we are distinctly told in the last verse of the Acts of the Apostles. As he had a hired house, he preached to all who would come to see him, and his great subject was Jesus Christ—"teaching those things which concern the *Lord Jesus Christ*." These three words are very important. Paul preached Christ as *Lord*; that is, the *sole potentate*, as upholding all things by the word of his power, governing the world and the Church; having all things under his control; in short, the maker and upholder of all things, and the Judge of all men. He preached him as *Jesus*, that is, the *Saviour*; he who saves, delivers, and preserves, and especially who saves his people from their sins. He also preached him as *Christ*, that is, the *Messiah*, or *anointed one*; he who was appointed by God to this great and glorious work. Paul proved him to be the Messiah, foretold by the prophets, and ex-

pected by the Jews. And more than this, when we are told that Paul spent his time in "teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ," it includes, besides the things above mentioned, his *incarnation*, his *preaching*, his *miracles*, *persecutions*, *death*, *burial*, *resurrection*, *ascension*, *intercession*, &c. These were the subjects on which the Apostle preached during his two years' imprisonment at Rome, which doubtless he preached to the end of his life, and which are preached in their fulness, by all *true ministers of Jesus Christ*.

The history contained in the Acts of the Apostles here closes. Thus far, therefore, and no farther, are we led on the authority of the word of God. To carry the life of Paul down to the time of his death we have no materials on which we can positively depend. Still we can ascertain a good deal which we have every reason to believe to be true; and hoping that the reader will bear in mind, that all has now been said which the word of God contains, the next chapter will close the account with information derived from other sources.

CHAPTER XXI.

Travels of Paul, after his release from his first imprisonment in Rome—His subsequent imprisonment and death.

AFTER Paul was released from his confinement, as mentioned in the last chapter, he remained a short time in Italy, waiting for Timothy to come to him from Philippi, where it would appear he had been sent by Paul, just before his release, as you will see in his letter to the Philippians, chap. ii. 19—23. During the time in which he waited for Timothy, Paul is supposed to have written his epistle to the Hebrews, which is intended to prove to the Jews, from their own scriptures, the Divinity, humanity, atonement, and intercession of Christ—the superiority of the Gospel to the law, and the real object and design of the Mosaic institutions. After the finishing of this epistle, it is generally supposed that Paul visited those places which, in several of his epistles, he had promised to visit. Thus, in his epistle to the Romans, he intimated his

wish to go into Spain, and after having preached the Gospel in various parts of Italy, he most probably fulfilled this promise, and at the same time visited France and Great Britain. A writer by the name of Clemens Romanus, the intimate friend and fellow labourer of Paul, tells us, that the Apostle preached the Gospel to the utmost *bounds of the West*, a method of speaking, which included Spain, Gaul, or France, and Great Britain. On his return from the west, accompanied by Timothy, he sailed to Judea, and went once more to Jerusalem, and from there into Antioch of Syria. From Antioch it is probable that he visited Colosse, as he had promised Philemon he would do;* and leaving Timothy at Ephesus, after he had excommunicated Hymeneus and Philetus, he departed for Macedonia, where he spent some time with his beloved Philippians, as he had expressed an intention so to do in his letter to them from Rome.† From Philippi, he went to Corinth, where, we are told in his epistle to Timothy, that he left Erastus.‡ From Corinth he went to Troas, and in his epistle to Titus, refers to a cloak and some

* Philemon 22. † Philip. i. 25; ii. 24. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 20.

parchments which he had left at that place, and which he requested Timothy to bring to him.* This little incident is a pleasing one, and must satisfy any one, that the epistle was actually written under the circumstances believed by us in reference to these sacred records. No one who was forging such writings would think telling about a cloak and papers left on a journey. Thence he went to Miletus, where he was obliged to leave Trophimus dangerously ill. From Miletus he went once more to Rome. During the absence of Paul from Rome, there had been a most grievous persecution of the Christians under the most abominable and wicked of all tyrants, the emperor Nero. At the period of Paul's return, the persecution had a little subsided, as the emperor had gone to Greece. However, Nero had delegated absolute power to Helius Cæsarionus, and Paul had been but a little time in Rome before he was seized by order of this man, as wicked as his master, and put into close and rigorous confinement. This was very different from what he had before experienced; then, he was permitted to live in his

* 2 Tim. iv. 13.

own hired house, and see what company he pleased; but now the case was altered. He was bound as a malefactor, and not permitted to have any close intimacy with the brethren, who still survived the persecution. It is not easy to tell his distress during this imprisonment; he was cut off from the opportunity of doing good; and so dispirited and broken down were the Christians, that he tells Timothy in a letter, that he had no man to stand by him. Onesiphorus however, from Ephesus, sought him out, and gave him comfort; but otherwise, no earthly friends stood by him. But there was ONE who never forsook him, the Master whom he served; and HIS presence animated the soul of the Apostle in the prospect of a cruel death. In the anticipation of this death, he wrote to his beloved Timothy his second epistle, which no one can read without being struck with the calmness and holy joy which marked the termination of his earthly career. There is something most singularly sublime and affecting in the charge which he addresses to Timothy in the fourth chapter of this epistle; and its solemnity is greatly increased, as he alludes to his prospect

of speedy dissolution. The charge to Timothy is one which needs no comment.—“ I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

The closing part of this address shows that Paul was triumphantly expecting the speedy termination of his earthly career ; and

in this he was not mistaken. We have no authentic account of the precise manner of his death; but, according to primitive tradition, he was beheaded with a sword, on the 29th day of June, in the year of our Lord 66, at a place called *Aqua Salvia*, three miles distant from Rome; and that his body was deposited in a grave two miles from Rome, on the road named *Via Ostensis*. When the Christian religion became the religion of the Roman empire, Constantine the Great erected a church on the spot where the mortal remains of the Apostle were deposited.

Though Paul died by the hands of the executioner, a martyr to the cause of Jesus Christ; and though when he was buried, no splendid monument told the place where his body rested in hope of a glorious resurrection—he has ever had erected to his memory a monument which shall last beyond all the ravages of time. That monument consists of the thousands, nay, the millions, who have been, and still will be, converted to the faith of Christianity, by the infinite grace of God, through the instrumentality of the preaching and the writings of this great Apostle.

In the conversion, the life, the untiring zeal and perseverance, the splendid talents, the fidelity, the energy, the boldness, the entire devotedness of Paul, we mark the wonders of Almighty Grace, in consecrating such rare intellectual and moral endowments, to the best, and holiest, and most important of all causes—the salvation of perishing sinners. And in his death, and its preceding circumstances, we mark the sustaining energy of grace—which, in the triumphs of its power, enabled him calmly to take leave of a world for whose conversion he had laboured; and with rapture to enter into the presence of a Saviour for whose cause he had not only lived but died. Next to his DIVINE MASTER, Paul will ever stand out, through the influence of sovereign grace, the GREATEST BENEFACITOR OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

ANALYSIS

Of the History of the Acts of the Apostles.

IF we carefully examine the Acts of the Apostles, we shall perceive that Saint Luke had two objects in view:—1. To relate in what manner the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated on the day of Pentecost, and the subsequent miracles performed by the Apostles, by which the truth of Christianity was confirmed. An authentic account of this matter was absolutely necessary, because Christ had so often assured his disciples, that they should receive the Holy Spirit. Unbelievers, therefore, whether Jews or Heathens, might have made objections to our religion, if it had not been shown that Christ's declaration was really fulfilled.—2. To deliver such accounts as proved the claim of the Gentiles to admission into the church of Christ,—a claim disputed by the Jews, especially at the time when Saint Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. And it was this very circumstance which excited the hatred of the Jews against Saint Paul, and occasioned his imprisonment in Rome, with which Saint Luke closes his history. Hence we see the reason why he relates (ch. viii.) the conversion of the Samaritans, and (ch. x, xi.) the

story of Cornelius, whom Saint Peter (to whose authority the adversaries of Saint Paul had appealed in favour of circumcision) baptised, though he was not of the circumcision. Hence also Saint Luke relates the determination of the first council in Jerusalem relative to the Levitical law: and for the same reason he is more diffuse in his account of Saint Paul's conversion, and Saint Paul's preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, than on any other subject. It is true, that the whole relation, which Saint Luke has given (ch. xii.) has no connexion with the conversion of the Gentiles: but during the period, to which that chapter relates, Saint Paul himself was present at Jerusalem, (see Acts xi. 30; xii. 25,) and it is probable, for that reason, that Saint Luke has introduced it. But there is, 3. A third opinion which Michaelis thinks not devoid of probability, viz. that Saint Luke might design to record only those facts, which he had either seen himself or had heard from eye-witnesses.

The Acts of the Apostles, Michaelis observes, were evidently written with a tolerably strict attention to chronological order; though Saint Luke has not affixed a date to any one of the facts recorded by him. There are, however, several parts of this book, in which ecclesiastical history is combined with political facts, the dates of which are known: and these Michaelis has endeavoured to determine, because the chronology will not only con-

tribute to illustrate the Acts of the Apostles, but also will assist us in fixing the year when many of Saint Paul's epistles were written. Taking for granted, therefore, that this book commences with the year 33 of the Christian æra, (in which calculation he follows Archbishop Usher,) he has given us the following series of dates.

1. "*The first epoch*, after the commencement of the book, is at ch. xi. 29, 30; for what happened between the first Pentecost after Christ's ascension and this period is without any marks of chronology. But at ch. xi. 29, 30, we have a date: for the famine which took place in the time of Claudius Cæsar, and which induced the disciples at Antioch to send relief to their brethren in Judea, happened in the fourth year of Claudius's reign, that is, in the year 44 of the Christian æra.

2. *Second epoch*. Herod Agrippa dies soon after he had put to death the apostle Saint James: and about that time Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas return from Jerusalem to Antioch. (ch. xii. 21—25.) This is still in the year 44.

3. *Third epoch*. (ch. xviii. 2.) Shortly after the banishment of the Jews from Italy by Claudius Cæsar, Saint Paul arrives at Corinth. Commentators affix the date of 54 to this event; but it is uncertain, for Suetonius, the only historian who has noticed this banishment of the Jews, mentions it without date.

4. *Fourth epoch.* Saint Paul comes to Jerusalem, where he is imprisoned by the Jews, not long after the disturbances which were excited by the Egyptian. (ch. xxi. 37—39.) This imprisonment of Saint Paul happened in the year 60, for it was two years before Felix quitted his government of Judea. (ch. xxiii. 26; xxiv. 27.)

5. *Fifth epoch.* Two years after the commencement of Saint Paul's imprisonment, Festus is appointed governor of Judea, A. D. 62. (ch. xxiv. 27; xxv. 1.)

From this period the chronology of the Acts of the Apostles is clear. Saint Paul is sent prisoner to Rome in the autumn of the same year in which Festus arrived in Judea: he suffers shipwreck, passes the winter in Malta, and arrives in Rome in the following year, that is, in 63. (ch. xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.)

The Acts of the Apostles close with the end of the second year of Saint Paul's imprisonment in Rome: consequently, in the year 65. (ch. xxviii. 30.)"

It is difficult to determine the date of the events that happened between the epochs 33 and 34, and between 44 and 60, especially the time of Saint Paul's conversion and of the council at Jerusalem. Archbishop Usher places the first of these transactions, A. D. 35, others in 38. But though we cannot attain to absolute certainty, a probable conjecture may be formed. Thus, Michaelis remarks,

Saint Stephen hardly suffered martyrdom before Pilate was recalled from the government of Judea; because, under that procurator, the Jews had not the power of inflicting capital punishments. Now, according to Usher, the year in which Pilate was recalled, was the thirty-sixth of the Christian æra, Saint Stephen's martyrdom therefore probably happened after 36. If this be true, Saint Paul's conversion must have happened likewise after 36, and therefore 35 is too early a date. But how long after 36, or whether in 38, cannot be determined.

In what manner the chapters iii, iv, v, vi, are to be arranged between 33 and 36, Michaelis cannot determine: for what chronologers have said is mere conjecture, and not calculation. The same uncertainty prevails in respect to ch. viii and x: for we can affirm nothing more, than that the one must be placed before the other, after 36. We are likewise in the dark with respect to ch. xiii, xiv, and several other chapters. Of ch. xvi, we may assert, that it belongs to a period at least six years prior to the fourth epoch, or the year 60: for a year and an half at Corinth, three years at Ephesus, and the time spent on several journeys, can hardly be pressed into a smaller compass than that of six years. To ch. xvi, therefore, the latest date which can be assigned is 54: and it is not improbable that it should be dated still earlier.

The Acts of the Apostles, as they appear in our copies, may be divided into three principal parts, viz.

PART I. contains the rise and progress of the mother church at Jerusalem from the time of our Saviour's ascension to the first Jewish persecution. (ch. i—viii.)

SECT. 1. The transactions before and after Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven. (i.)

SECT. 2. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at the feast of Pentecost, and Peter's discourse to the people in consequence of it. (ii.)

SECT. 3. A lame man healed by Peter and John—Peter's discourse to the people—Events that befel the apostles in consequence of that miracle. (iii, iv.)

SECT. 4. The death of Ananias and Sapphira.—Miracles of the apostles,—who are scourged and dismissed. (v.)

SECT. 5. The institution of deacons,—the discourse and martyrdom of Stephen,—and the first Jewish persecution. (vi, vii, viii. 1—4.)

PART II. comprises the dispersion of the disciples—the propagation of Christianity among the Samaritans—the conversion of Saint Paul, and the foundation of a Christian church at Antioch. (viii. 5—12.)

SECT. 1. The planting of the church at Samaria. (viii. 15—25.)

SECT. 2. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. (viii. 26—40.)

SECT. 3. The conversion, baptism, and first preaching of Saint Paul. (ix.)

SECT. 4. Account of two miracles performed by Peter, and the conversion of Cornelius and his family. (x, xi. 1—18.)

SECT. 5. The first Gentile church founded at Antioch. (xi. 19—30.)

SECT. 6. The apostle James put to death by Herod Agrippa,—relation of his miserable death. (xii.)

PART III. *describes the conversion of the more remote Gentiles, by Barnabas and Paul, and, after their separation, by Paul and his associates, among whom was Luke himself during the latter part of Paul's labours.* (xiii—xxviii.)

SECT. 1. The planting of several churches in the isle of Cyprus, at Perga in Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.—The return of Saint Paul to Antioch. (xiii, xiv.)

SECT. 2. Discussion of the question by the apostles at Jerusalem, concerning the necessity of circumcision and of observing the law.—Their letter to the churches on this subject. (xv. 1—35.)

SECT. 3. Paul's second departure from Antioch.—He preaches the Gospel in various countries, particularly at Philippi in Ma-

- cedonia.—The conversion of the Philip-
pian gaoler. (xv. 36—40; xvi.)
- SECT. 4. The journeys and apostolical labours
of Paul and his associates at Thessalonica,
Berea, and Athens.—His masterly apology
before the court of the Areopagites. (xvii.)
- SECT. 5. Paul's journey to Corinth, and thence
to Antioch. (xviii. 1—22.)
- SECT. 6. Paul's third departure from An-
tioch.—Consequences of his preaching at
Ephesus. (xviii. 23—28; xix.)
- SECT. 7. The labours of Paul in Greece and
Asia Minor, and his journey to Jerusa-
lem. (xx.)
- SECT. 8. The persecution of Paul at Jerusa-
lem.—He is sent a prisoner to Cæsarea.—
(xxi—xxiii. 1—30.)
- SECT. 9. Paul's arrival at Cæsarea.—The
charges of the Jews against him.—His de-
fence before Felix.—Appeal to Cæsar.—
His defence before Agrippa, at whose re-
quest his cause was reheard. (xxiii. 31—
35; xxiv—xxvi.)
- SECT. 10. Narrative of Paul's voyage from
Cæsarea.—His shipwreck on the isle of
Malta.—His voyage thence to Rome, where
he preaches the Gospel to the Jews, and
resides for two years. (xxvii, xxviii.)

